

FOUNDED 1892

THE SEWANEE REVIEW

EDITED BY ALLEN TATE

Editorial Assistant MILDRED HAUN

Advisers HENRY CHURCH, GILBERT E. GOVAN

VOLUME LIII, NUMBER 3

JULY-SEPTEMBER, 1945

CONTENTS

THE MAN OF LETTERS AND THE FUTURE OF EUROPE	T. S. ELIOT	333
WILLIAM FAULKNER'S LEGEND OF THE SOUTH	MALCOLM COWLEY	343
THE GUIDE, A STORY	ANDREW LYTLE	362
THE CONSPIRACY, A STORY	ROSEMARY PARIS	388
PREFACE TO DECISION	DONALD DAVIDSON	394
VISION AND PRAYER, A POEM	DYLAN THOMAS	413
FIVE POEMS	RANDALL JARRELL	425
FOUR POEMS	JOSEPHINE MILES	430
SPATIAL FORM IN MODERN LITERATURE II	JOSEPH FRANK	433
BOOK REVIEWS		
TWENTY-FOUR POETS	DENIS DEVLIN	457
BOOKS ON EDUCATION	FRANCIS FERGUSSON	466
DEMOCRACY AND FREEDOM	HENRY BAMFORD PARKES	476

A SERIOUS FRENCHMAN	HARRY LEVIN	486
WESCOTT, PROKOSCH AND THREE OTHERS	IRENE HENDRY	489
THE PROFESSOR AS JOURNALIST, AND VICE VERSA	ROBERT HEILMAN	496
A HOUSE DIVIDED	FRANK L. OWSLEY	500
THE STATE OF LETTERS	ALLEN TATE	504



PUBLISHED QUARTERLY BY THE UNIVERSITY OF THE SOUTH
SEWANEE, TENNESSEE

COPYRIGHT 1945 BY
THE UNIVERSITY OF THE SOUTH

Subscription: \$3.00 a year

Entered as second-class matter at the post office at Sewanee,
Tennessee, under act of March 3, 1879.

Unsolicited manuscripts must be accompanied by return postage.
Payment for contributions will be made on publication.

New York Agent:
THE GOTHAM BOOK MART
51 West 47 Street
New York 19, N. Y.



THE MAN OF LETTERS AND THE FUTURE OF EUROPE¹

By T. S. ELIOT

I wish first to define the sense in which I shall use the term "man of letters." I shall mean the writer for whom his writing is primarily an *art*, who is as much concerned with style as with content; the understanding of whose writings, therefore, depends as much upon appreciation of style as upon comprehension of content. This is primarily the poet (including the dramatic poet), and the writer of prose fiction. To give emphasis to these two kinds of writer is not to deny the title "man of letters" to writers in many other fields: it is simply a way of isolating the problem of responsibility of the man of letters *qua* man of letters; and if what I have to say is true for the poet and the novelist, it will also be true for other writers in so far as they are "artists."

The first responsibility of the man of letters is, of course, his responsibility towards his art, the same, which neither time nor circumstance can abate or modify, that other artists have: that is, he must do his best with the medium in which he works. He differs from other artists, in that his medium is his language: we do not all paint pictures, and we are not all musicians, but we all talk. This fact gives the man of letters a special responsibility

¹This essay is reprinted by permission of Mr. T. S. Eliot from the Norwegian magazine *THE NORSEMAN*.

towards everybody who speaks the same language, a responsibility which workers in other arts do not share. But, in general, special responsibilities which fall upon the man of letters at any time must take second place to his permanent responsibility as a literary artist. However, the man of letters is not, as a rule, exclusively engaged upon the production of works of art. He has other interests, like anybody else; interests which will, in all probability, exercise some influence upon the content and meaning of the works of art which he does produce. He has the same responsibility, and should have the same concern with the fate of his country, and with political and social affairs within it, as any other citizen; and in matters of controversy, there is no more reason why two men of letters should hold identical opinions, and support the same party and programme, than why any other two citizens should. Yet there are matters of public concern, in which the man of letters should express his opinion, and exert his influence, not merely as a citizen but as a man of letters: and upon such matters I think that it is desirable that men of letters should agree. In proceeding to suggest some of these, I have no expectation that all men of letters *will* agree with me: but if I confined myself to statements to which all men of letters, as men of letters, could give immediate assent, I should only be uttering platitudes.

The man of letters as such, is not concerned with the political or economic map of Europe; but he should be very much concerned with its cultural map. This problem, involving the relations of different cultures and languages in Europe, must have presented itself first, to the man of letters, as a domestic problem: in this context, foreign affairs are merely an extension of domestic affairs. Nearly every country, that has been long settled, is a composite of different local cultures; and even when it is completely homogeneous in race, it will, between east and west, or more often between north and south, exhibit differences of speech, of customs, and of ways of thinking and feeling. A small country of course, is usually assumed by foreigners to be much more

unified than it really is: and although the educated foreigner is aware that Britain contains within its small area several races and several languages, he may underestimate the importance of both the friction, and the often happy combination toward a common end, of the different types. It is a commonplace that industrialism (of which totalitarianism is a political expression) tends to obliterate these differences, to uproot men from their ancestral habitat, to mingle them in large manufacturing and business centres, or to send them hither and thither as the needs of manufacture and distribution may dictate. In its political aspect, industrialism tends to centralize the direction of affairs in one large metropolis, and to diminish that interest in, and control over, local affairs by which men gain political experience and sense of responsibility. Against this tendency, "regionalism"—as in the demand, from time to time, for greater local autonomy in Scotland or in Wales—is a protest.

It has often been the weakness of "regionalist" movements, to assume that a cultural malady can be cured by political means; to ascribe, to individuals belonging to the dominant culture, malignant intentions of which they may be innocent; and, by not probing deep enough into the causes, to prescribe a superficial remedy. By the materialist, these regional stirrings are often regarded with derision. The man of letters, who should be peculiarly qualified to respect and to criticize them, should be able to take a longer view than either the politician or the local patriot. He should know that neither in a complete and universal uniformity, nor in an isolated self-sufficiency, can culture flourish; that a local and a general culture are so far from being in conflict, that they are truly necessary to each other. To the engineering mind, the idea of a universal uniformity on the one hand or the idea of complete autarchy on the other, is more easily apprehensible. The union of local cultures in a general culture is more difficult to conceive, and more difficult to realize. But the man of

letters should know that uniformity means the obliteration of culture, and that self-sufficiency means its death by starvation.

The man of letters should see also, that within any cultural unit, a proper balance of rural and urban life is essential. Without great cities—great, not necessarily in the modern material sense, but great by being the meeting-place of a society of superior mind and more polished manners—the culture of a nation will never rise above a rustic level; without the life of the soil from which to draw its strength, the urban culture must lose its source of strength and rejuvenescence. *Fortunatus et ille qui deos novit agrestes.*

What we learn from a study of conditions within our own countries, we can apply to the cultural economy of Europe. The primary aim of politics, at the end of a great war, must be, of course, the establishment of a peace, and of a peace which will endure. But at different times, different notions of what conditions are necessary for peace may prevail. At the end of the last war, the idea of peace was associated with the idea of independence and freedom: it was thought that if each nation managed all its own affairs at home, and transacted its foreign political affairs through a League of Nations, peace would be perpetually assured. It was an idea which disregarded the *unity* of European culture. At the end of this war, the idea of peace is more likely to be associated with the idea of *efficiency*—that is, with whatever can be *planned*. This would be to disregard the *diversity* of European culture. It is not that "culture" is in danger of being ignored: on the contrary, I think that culture might be safer if it were less talked about. But in this talk of "culture," the notion of a European culture—a culture with several sub-divisions, other than national boundaries, within it, and with various crossing threads of relationship between countries, but still a recognizable universal European culture—is not very prominent: and there is a danger that the importance of the various cultures may be assumed to be

in proportion to the size, population, wealth and power of the nations.

I have mentioned the problem of regional diversities of race and culture within one nation (as in Great Britain) not merely as a helpful *analogy* to the diversity of Europe, but because I think the two problems are essentially one and the same. I do not think that a unity between the main regional cultures of Europe is possible, unless each of the units is itself comprehensive of considerable diversity. A completely unified national culture, such as has been the ambition of German ideologues and politicians, for the last hundred years and more, to bring about in Germany, tends to become, as is easily seen from a purely political point of view, a menace to its neighbours. What is not so immediately obvious is that, from a cultural point of view, a nation so completely unified is a menace to itself. We can all see that in a nation the citizens of which have been trained to regard each other as brothers, we shall find the brotherliness intensified by, and in turn intensifying, a common hatred of foreigners. We can even say that a nation in which a good deal of internal bickering and quarrelling does not go on, cannot be a desirable member of the European community of nations. But I think that a nation which is completely unified culturally, will cease to produce any culture: so that there must be a certain amount of internal *cultural* bickering if it is to achieve anything in the way of art, thought and spiritual activity—and thereby make its contribution to the culture of Europe.

The achievement of a creative balance of local and racial forces, within a single nation or between the communities of Europe, seems to me, however, nothing like so easy as some theorists like Professor E. H. Carr, whose attention is concentrated upon purely political problems, seem to believe. "There is every reason to suppose," says Professor Carr in his *Conditions of Peace*, "that considerable numbers of Welshmen, Catalans and Uzbeks have quite sufficiently solved the problem of regarding themselves as

good Welshmen, Catalans and Uzbeks for some purposes and good British, Spanish and Soviet citizens for others." I do not know how considerable numbers of Catalans and Uzbeks feel about it; but so far as the Welsh are concerned, Professor Carr seems to me to have answered a question which no Welshman would ask. The majority of Welsh, I have no doubt, would regard themselves as both "good Welsh" and "good Britons" (apart from the fact that the Welsh have a better ancestral claim than most of us in this island to regard themselves as *Britons*—but Mr. Carr has been a professor at Aberystwyth, so he ought to know): the question for them is, whether Welsh culture can maintain and develop itself against the pressure towards indifferenced uniformity which is exerted from London. The same question is asked in Scotland; the same question should be asked in every county of England which has not already been absorbed by London or by some great provincial industrial town. And if all the parts of Britain lose their local cultures, they will have nothing to contribute to the formation of British culture, and consequently, Britain will have nothing to contribute to European culture.

I have suggested that the cultural health of Europe, including the cultural health of its component parts, is incompatible with extreme forms of both nationalism and internationalism. But the cause of that disease, which destroys the very soil in which culture has its roots, is not so much extreme ideas, and the fanaticism which they stimulate, as the relentless pressure of modern industrialism, setting the problems which the extreme ideas attempt to solve. Not least of the effects of industrialism is that we become mechanized in mind, and consequently attempt to provide solutions in terms of *engineering*, for problems which are essentially problems of *life*.

I may seem, in the foregoing pages, to have been departing further and further from the subject of this paper; the responsibility of the man of letters. Political problems will continue to be

dealt with by politicians, and economic problems by economists; and there must continually be compromises between the political and the economic points of view. And just as these are not two wholly separate areas of activity, which can be satisfactorily dealt with by two mutually independent groups of specialists, so the "cultural" area cannot be isolated from either of these. It would be very convenient if it were so, and if the men of letters, and the other people whose special concern may be said to be matters of "culture," could pursue their policies indifferent to what happens in the political and economic realms. The assumption that such a clear separation of activities can be made, seems to underlie such a statement of Professor Carr's as the following:

The existence of a more or less homogeneous racial or linguistic group bound together by a common tradition and the cultivation of a common culture must cease to provide a *prima facie* case for the setting up or the maintenance of an independent political unit. (*Conditions of Peace*, p. 62.)

One cannot say that this statement, as it stands, is unacceptable. But it needs qualification; for, otherwise, one might infer from it that the "culture" of a "more or less homogeneous racial or linguistic group bound together by a common tradition and the cultivation of a common culture" can flourish unimpaired, whatever its degree of political subordination. In other words, I raise the question whether the culture of such a group can remain independent, without some degree of political independence: though on the other hand, I assert that *complete* cultural autarchy is not compatible with the existence of a common European culture. The world's real problems are in practice a complex, usually a confusion, of political, economic, cultural and religious considerations; in one or another situation, one or more of these will be sacrificed to the one which is, in that situation, the most compulsive; but every one of them involves the rest.

The responsibility of the man of letters at the present time,

according to this point of view, is neither to ignore politics and economics, nor, certainly, to desert literature in order to precipitate himself into controversy on matters which he does not understand. But he should be vigilantly watching the conduct of politicians and economists, for the purpose of criticizing and warning, when the decisions and actions of politicians and economists are likely to have cultural consequences. Of these consequences the man of letters should prepare himself to judge. Of the possible cultural consequences of their activities, politicians and economists are usually oblivious; the man of letters is better qualified to foresee them, and to perceive their seriousness.*

I should not like to give the impression that I assume there to be a definite frontier, between the matters of direct and those of indirect concern to the man of letters. In matters of Education, for instance, he is less directly concerned with the problems of organization and administration of popular instruction, than he is with the *content* of education. He should certainly be aware, of what many persons seem to be ignorant, that it is possible to have a high state of culture with very little education, and a great deal of education without any consequent improvement of culture: from some points of view he will not take education quite so seriously as other people seem to do. But he is very much concerned with the maintenance of *quality*, and with the constant reminder of what is easily overlooked: that, if we had to choose, it would be better that a few people should be educated well, than that everyone should be educated moderately well. He should also be particularly concerned with the maintenance of those elements in education which the several European nations have in the past had in common. We are not only in danger of, we are actually suffering from, excessive nationalism in education. The common higher elements of European secular education are, I

*A case in point is the recent Education Act in this country. No one so far, appears to have devoted any attention to the probable effects of such a measure upon English culture: even the ecclesiastics have not arrived at any definite view of the probable effects upon English religion.

presume, the cultivation of Latin and Greek language and literature, and the cultivation of pure science. At a time when science is chiefly advertised for the sake of the practical benefits, from invention and discovery, which the application of science may confer, the reminder is perhaps not inappropriate, that applied science is always liable to be contaminated by political and economic motives, and that inventions and discoveries appeal to people as often for their usefulness in getting the better of other people, in peace and in war, as for their common benefits to mankind. And also, that it is not the use of the same machines and the enjoyment of the same comforts and therapeutic aids, that can establish and develop a common mind, a common culture. I speak of science with some hesitation: but I am wholly convinced that for the preservation of any European culture, as well as for the health of its national components, a perpetual cultivation of the sources of that culture, in Greece and Rome, and a continual refreshment from them, are necessary. I should say Israel also, but that I wish to confine myself, so far as that is possible, to the cultural, rather than the religious aspect.

There are other matters over which the man of letters should exercise constant surveillance: matters which may, from time to time, and here and there, present themselves with immediate urgency. Such are the questions which arise in particular contexts, when the freedom of the man of letters is menaced. I have in mind, not merely questions of censorship, whether political, religious or moral: my experience tells me that these issues must be faced as they arise. I have in mind also the dangers which may come from official encouragement and patronage of the arts; the dangers to which men of letters would be exposed, if they became, in their professional capacity, servants of the State.* Modern governments are very much aware of the new invention

*Formerly, English men of letters often found their livelihood in the Civil Service. But this kind of dependence upon the State enabled them to be all the freer to follow their own aims and observe their own consciences as writers. This was a very different thing from serving the State *as men of Letters*. In the future it seems likely that Civil Servants will be far too busy to be authors in their spare time, and that the Civil Service will not enlist men of this type.

"cultural propaganda," even when the governors are not remarkably sensitive to culture: and, however necessary cultural propaganda may be under modern conditions, we must be alert to the fact that all propaganda can be perverted.

As I said earlier, I do not expect that all men of letters, in every country of Europe, will concur with my *views*; but I venture to hope that some of them will agree, that there is a range of public problems in which we all have, irrespective of nationality, language or political bias, a common interest, and about which we might hope to have a common mind; and I hope that some will agree that I have stated some of these problems. Such agreement would give more content to the phrase "the republic of letters." The "republic" or (to use a stronger term) the "fraternity" of letters does not, fortunately, demand that all men of letters should love one another—there always have been, and always will be, jealousy and intrigue amongst authors: but it does imply that we have a mutual bond, and a mutual obligation to a common ideal; and that on some questions we should speak for Europe, even when we speak only to our fellow-countrymen.

WILLIAM FAULKNER'S LEGEND OF THE SOUTH

BY MALCOLM COWLEY

WILLIAM FAULKNER is one of the writers who reward and even in a sense demand a second reading. When you return to one of his books years after its publication, the passages that had puzzled you are easier to understand and each of them takes its proper place in the picture. Moreover, you lose very little by knowing the plot in advance. Faulkner's stories are not the sort that unwind in celluloid ribbons until the last inch of them has been reflected on a flat screen, with nothing to imagine and nothing more to see except the newsreel, the animated cartoon and the Coming Repulsions; instead his books are sculptural, as if you could walk round them for different views of the same solid object. But it is not merely a statue that he presents: rather it is a whole monument or, let us say, a city buried in the jungle, to which the author wishes to guide us, but not at once or by following a single path. We start out along one road, winding between walls of jungle growth in the humid afternoon, and it is not long until we catch a glimpse of our destination. Just beyond us, however, is a swamp filled with snakes, and the guide makes us turn back. We take another road; we gain a clearer picture of the city; but this time there are other dangers in front of us, quicksands or precipices, and again the guide makes us return. By whatever road we travel, we always catch sight of our goal, always learn more about it and are always forced back; till at last we find the proper path and reach the heart of the city just as it is about to be overwhelmed by fire or earthquake. . . . Reading the same book a second time is like soaring over the jungle in a plane, with every section of the landscape falling into its proper perspective.

And there is another respect in which our judgment of the

author changes when we return to not one but several of his novels in succession. On a first reading what had chiefly impressed us may have been their violence, which sometimes seemed to have no justification in art or nature. We had remembered incidents and figures like the violating of Temple Drake, in *Sanctuary*; like the pursuit and castration of Joe Christmas, in *Light in August*; like the idiot boy who fell in love and eloped with a cow, in *The Hamlet*; and like the nameless woman, in *The Wild Palms*, who bore her child unaided in the midst of a Mississippi River flood, on an Indian mound where all the snakes in the Delta had taken refuge. After a second reading, most of these nightmares retain their power to shock, but at the same time they merge a little into the background, as if they were the almost natural product of the long unbearable Mississippi summers; as if they were thunder showers brewed in the windless heat. We pay less attention to the horrors as such, and more to the old situation out of which they developed and the new disasters it seems to foreshadow.

The situation itself, and not the violence to which it leads, is Faulkner's real subject. It is, moreover, the same situation in all his books—or, let us say, in all the novels and stories belonging to his Yocknapatawpha County series. Briefly it is the destruction of the old Southern order, by war and military occupation and still more by finance capitalism that tempts and destroys it from within. "Tell about the South," says Quentin Compson's roommate at Harvard, who comes from Edmonton, Alberta, and is curious about the unknown region beyond the Ohio. "What's it like there?" Shreve McCannon goes on to ask. "What do they do there? Why do they live there? Why do they live at all?" And Quentin, whose background is a little like that of the author and who often seems to speak for him—Quentin answers, "You can't understand it. You would have to be born there." Nevertheless, he tells a long and violent story that he regards as the essence of the Deep South, which is

not so much a region as it is, in Quentin's mind, an incomplete and frustrated nation trying to recover its own identity, trying to relive its legendary past.

There was a boy, Quentin says—I am giving the plot of *Absalom, Absalom!*—a mountain boy named Thomas Sutpen whose family drifted into the Virginia Tidewater. There his father found odd jobs on a plantation. One day the father sent him with a message to the big house, but he was turned away at the door by a black man in livery. The mountain boy, puzzled and humiliated, was seized upon by the ambition to which he would afterwards refer as "the design." He would own a plantation, with slaves and a liveried butler; he would build a mansion as big as any of those in the Tidewater; and he would have a son to inherit his wealth.

A dozen years later, Sutpen appeared in the frontier town of Jefferson, Mississippi, and, by some transaction the nature of which is never explained—though it certainly wasn't by honest purchase—he obtained a hundred square miles of land from the Chickasaws. He disappeared again, and this time he returned with twenty wild Negroes from the jungle and a French architect. On the day of his reappearance, he set about building the largest house in northern Mississippi, with timbers from the forest and bricks that his Negroes molded and baked on the spot; it was as if his mansion, Sutpen's Hundred, had been literally torn from the soil. Only one man in Jefferson—he was Quentin's grandfather, General Compson—ever learned how and where Sutpen had acquired his slaves. He had shipped to Haiti from Virginia, worked as an overseer on a sugar plantation and married the rich planter's daughter, who had borne him a son. Then, finding that his wife had Negro blood, he had simply put her away, with her child and her fortune, while keeping the twenty slaves as a sort of indemnity. He explained to General Compson in the stilted speech he had taught himself that she could not be "adjunctive to the forwarding of the design."

"Jesus, the South is fine, isn't it," says Shreve McCannon, listening while Quentin talks, half to himself. "It's better than the theatre, isn't it. It's better than Ben Hur, isn't it. No wonder you have to come away now and then, isn't it."

Sutpen married again, Quentin continues. This time his wife belonged to a pious family of the neighborhood, and she bore him two children, Henry and Judith. He became the biggest landowner and cotton planter in the county, and it seemed that his "design" had already been fulfilled. At this moment, however—it was Christmas in 1859—Henry came home from the University of Mississippi with an older and worldlier new friend, Charles Bon, who was in reality Sutpen's son by his first marriage. Charles became engaged to Judith. Sutpen learned his identity and, without making a sign of recognition, ordered him to leave the house. Henry, who refused to believe that Charles was his half-brother, renounced his birthright and followed him to New Orleans. In 1861 all the male Sutpens went off to war, and all of them survived four years of fighting. Then, in the spring of 1865, Charles suddenly decided to marry Judith, even though he was certain by now that she was his half-sister. Henry rode beside him all the way back to Sutpen's Hundred, but tried to stop him at the gate, killed him when he insisted on going ahead with his plan, told Judith what he had done, and disappeared.

"The South," Shreve McCannon says as he listens to the story. "The South. Jesus. No wonder you folks all outlive yourselves by years and years." And Quentin says, remembering his own sister with whom he was in love—just as Charles Bon, and Henry too, were in love with Judith—"I am older at twenty than a lot of people who have died."

But Quentin's story of the Deep South does not end with the war. Colonel Sutpen came home, he says, to find his wife dead, his son a fugitive, his slaves dispersed (they had run away even before they were freed by the Union army) and most of his land about to be seized for debt. But still determined to carry out

"the design," he did not even pause for breath before undertaking to restore his house and plantation as nearly as possible to what they had been. The effort failed; he lost most of his land and was reduced to keeping a crossroads store. Now in his sixties, he tried again to beget a son; but his wife's younger sister, Miss Rosa Coldfield, was outraged by his proposal ("Let's try it," he had said, "and if it's a boy we'll get married."); and later poor Milly Jones, with whom he had an affair, gave birth to a baby girl. At that Sutpen abandoned hope and provoked Milly's grandfather into killing him. Judith survived her father for a time, as did the half-caste son of Charles Bon by a New Orleans octoroon. After the death of these two by yellow fever, the great house was haunted rather than inhabited by an ancient mulatto woman, Sutpen's daughter by one of his slaves. The fugitive Henry Sutpen came home to die; the townspeople heard of his illness and sent an ambulance after him; but old Clytie thought they were arresting him for murder and set fire to Sutpen's Hundred. The only survivor of the conflagration was Jim Bond, a half-witted, saddle-colored creature who was Charles Bon's grandson.

"Do you know what I think?" says Shreve McCannon after the story has ended. "I think that in time the Jim Bonds are going to conquer the western hemisphere. Of course it won't be quite in our time and of course as they spread toward the poles they will bleach out again like the rabbits and the birds do, so they won't show up so sharp against the snow. But it will still be Jim Bond; and so in a few thousand years, I who regard you will also have sprung from the loins of African kings. Now I want you to tell me just one thing more. Why do you hate the South?"

"I don't hate it," Quentin says quickly, at once. "I don't hate it," he repeats, speaking for the author as well as himself. *I don't hate it*, he thinks, panting in the cold air, the iron New England dark; *I don't. I don't! I don't hate it! I don't hate it!*

The reader cannot help wondering why this sombre and, at moments, plainly incredible story had so seized upon Quentin's mind that he trembled with excitement when telling it and felt that it revealed the essence of the Deep South. It seems to belong in the realm of Gothic romances, with Sutpen's Hundred taking the place of the haunted castle on the Rhine, with Colonel Sutpen as Faust and Charles Bon as Manfred. Then slowly it dawns on you that most of the characters and incidents have a double meaning; that besides their place in the story, they also serve as symbols or metaphors with a general application. Sutpen's great design, the land he stole from the Indians, the French architect who built his house with the help of wild Negroes from the jungle, the woman of mixed blood whom he married and disowned, the unacknowledged son who ruined him, the poor white whom he wronged and who killed him in anger, the final destruction of the mansion like the downfall of a social order: all these might belong to a tragic fable of Southern history. With a little cleverness, the whole novel might be explained as a connected and logical allegory, but this, I think, would be going beyond the author's intention. First of all he was writing a story, and one that affected him deeply, but he was also brooding over a social situation. More or less unconsciously, the incidents in the story came to represent the forces and elements in the social situation, since the mind naturally works in terms of symbols and parallels. In Faulkner's case, this form of parallelism is not confined to *Absalom, Absalom!* It can be found in the whole fictional framework that he has been elaborating in novel after novel, until his work has become a myth or legend of the South.

I call it a legend because it is obviously no more intended as a historical account of the country south of the Ohio than *The Scarlet Letter* is intended as a history of Massachusetts or *Paradise Lost* as a factual description of the Fall. Briefly stated, the legend might run something like this: The Deep South was set-

tled partly by aristocrats like the Sartoris clan and partly by new men like Colonel Sutpen. Both types of planters were determined to establish a lasting social order on the land they had seized from the Indians (that is, to leave sons behind them). They had the virtue of living single-mindedly by a fixed code; but there was also an inherent guilt in their "design," their way of life, that put a curse on the land and brought about the Civil War. After the War was lost, partly as a result of their own mad heroism (for who else but men as brave as Jackson and Stuart could have frightened the Yankees into standing together and fighting back?) they tried to restore "the design" by other methods. But they no longer had the strength to achieve more than a partial success, even after they had freed their land from the carpetbaggers who followed the Northern armies. As time passed, moreover, the men of the old order found that they had Southern enemies too: they had to fight against a new exploiting class descended from the landless whites of slavery days. In this struggle between the clan of Sartoris and the unscrupulous tribe of Snopes, the Sartorises were defeated in advance by a traditional code that prevented them from using the weapons of the enemy. But the Snopeses as price of their victory had to serve the mechanized civilization of the North, which was morally impotent in itself, but which, with the aid of its Southern retainers, ended by corrupting the Southern nation. In our own day, the problems of the South are still unsolved, the racial conflict is becoming more acute; and Faulkner's characters in their despairing moments foresee or forebode some catastrophe of which Jim Bond and his like will be the only survivors.

II

This legend of Faulkner's, if I have stated it correctly, is clearly not a scientific interpretation of Southern history (if such a thing exists); but neither is it the familiar plantation legend that has been embodied in hundreds of romantic novels. Faulk-

ner presents the virtues of the old order as being moral rather than material. There is no baronial pomp in his novels; no profusion of silk and silver, mahogany and moonlight and champagne. The big house on Mr. Hubert Beauchamp's plantation (in *Go Down, Moses*) had a rotted floorboard in the back gallery that Mr. Hubert never got round to having fixed. Visitors used to find him sitting in the spring-house with his boots off and his feet in the water while he drank a morning toddy, which he invited them to share. Visitors to Sutpen's Hundred were offered champagne: it was the best, doubtless, and yet it was "crudely dispensed out of the burlesqued pantomine elegance of Negro butlers who (and likewise the drinkers who gulped it down like neat whiskey between flowery and unsubtle toasts) would have treated lemonade the same way." All the planters lived comfortably, with plenty of servants, but Faulkner never lets us forget that they were living on what had recently been the frontier. What he admires about them is not their wealth or their manners or their fine houses, but rather their unquestioning acceptance of a moral code that taught them "courage and honor and pride, and pity and love of justice and of liberty." Living with single hearts, they were, says Quentin Compson's father:

. . . people too as we are, and victims too as we are, but victims of a different circumstance, simpler and therefore, integer for integer, larger, more heroic and the figures therefore more heroic too, not dwarfed and involved but distinct, uncomplex, who had the gift of living once or dying once instead of being diffused and scattered creatures drawn blindly limb from limb from a grab bag and assembled, author and victim too of a thousand homicides and a thousand copulations and divorcements.

The old order was a moral order: briefly that was its strength and the secret lost by its heirs. I don't wish to give the impression that Faulkner is the only Southern writer to advance this

principle. During the last few years, it has been stated or suggested in a considerable body of Southern fiction and poetry, including the work of Allen Tate, Robert Penn Warren, Caroline Gordon and several others. The fact is that most of the ideas embodied in Faulkner's legend are held in common by many Southern writers of the new generation; what Faulkner has done is to express them in a whole series of novels written with his own emotional intensity and technical resourcefulness. But his version of the legend also has features that set it apart: most notably its emphasis on the idea that the Southern nation (like most of his own fictional heroes) was defeated from within.

In Faulkner's reading, the old order not only had its virtues of dignity and courage and love of justice; it also bore the moral burden of a guilt so great that the War and even Reconstruction were in some sense a merited punishment. There is madness, but there is a metaphorical meaning too, in Miss Rosa Coldfield's belief that Sutpen was a demon and that his sins were the real reason "... why God let us lose the War: that only through the blood of our men and the tears of our women could He stay this demon and efface his name and lineage from the earth." Quentin's father is quite sane, in his sober moments, and yet he expresses almost the same idea about Sutpen's guilt and its consequences. He is telling the story of the Sutpens when he remarks that the Civil War was "... a stupid and bloody aberration in the high (and impossible) destiny of the United States, maybe instigated by that family fatality which possessed, along with all circumstance, that curious lack of economy between cause and effect which is always a characteristic of fate when reduced to using human materials."

Colonel Sutpen himself has a feeling, not exactly of guilt, since he has never questioned the rightness of his design, but rather of amazement that so many misfortunes have fallen on him. Sitting in General Compson's office, he goes back over his career, trying to see where he had made his "mistake," for that

is what he calls it. Sometimes the author seems to be implying that the sin for which Sutpen and his class are being punished is simply the act of cohabiting with Negroes. But before the end of *Absalom, Absalom!* we learn that miscegenation is only part of it. When Charles Bon's curious actions are explained, we find that he was taking revenge on his father for having refused to recognize him by so much as a single glance. Thus, heartlessness was the "mistake" that had ruined Sutpen, not the taking of a partly Negro wife and Negro concubines. And the point becomes clearer in a long story called "The Bear" (in *Go Down, Moses*), probably the best single piece that Faulkner has written. When Isaac McCaslin is twenty-one, he insists on relinquishing the big plantation that is his by inheritance; he thinks that the land is cursed. It is cursed in his eyes by the deeds of his grandfather: "that evil and unregenerate old man who could summon, because she was his property, a human being because she was old enough and female, to his widower's house and get a child on her and then dismiss her because she was of an inferior race, and then bequeath a thousand dollars to the infant because he would be dead then and wouldn't have to pay it." It follows that the land was cursed—and the War was part of the curse—because its owners had treated human beings as instruments; in a word, it was cursed by slavery.

All through his boyhood, Faulkner must have dreamed of fighting in the Civil War. It was a Sartoris war and not a Snopes war, like the one in which he afterwards risked his life in a foreign army. And yet his sympathies did not wholly lie with the slaveholding clan of Sartoris, even though it was his own clan. The men he most admired and must have pictured himself as resembling were the Southern soldiers—after all, they were the vast majority—who owned no slaves themselves and suffered from the institution of slavery. The men he would praise in his novels were those "who had fought for four years and lost . . . not because they were opposed to freedom as freedom, but for

the old reasons for which man (not the generals and politicians but man) has always fought and died in wars: to preserve a status quo or to establish a better future one to endure for his children." You might define his position as that of an anti-slavery Southern nationalist.

His attitude toward Negroes will seem surprising only to Northerners. It seems to have developed from the attitude of the slaveholders, which was often inhuman but never impersonal—that is, the slave might be treated as a domestic animal, but not as a machine or the servant of a machine. Apparently the slaveholding class had little or no feeling of racial animosity. Frederick Law Olmsted, a sharp and by no means a friendly observer, was struck by what he called "the close cohabitation and association of black and white." In his *Journey in the Seaboard Slave States*, the record of his travels in 1853-54, he said: "Negro women are carrying black and white babies together in their arms; black and white children are playing together (not going to school together); black and white faces are constantly thrust together out of the doors, to see the train go by." He described the relation between masters and servants as having "a familiarity and closeness of intimacy that would have been noticed with astonishment, if not with manifest displeasure, in almost any chance company at the North." In Faulkner's historical novels, we find this closeness of intimacy compounded with closeness of blood, for the servants are very often the illegitimate half-brothers or sisters of their white companions—not only more often than in life, a mild way of putting it, but also more often than in any Abolitionist tract. He describes the old South as inhabited by two races that lived essentially the same life on their different levels. Thus, he says in *Absalom, Absalom!* that the young planters were

. . . only in the surface matter of food and clothing and daily occupation any different from the Negro slaves who supported them—the same sweat, the only difference being

that on the one hand it went for labor in fields where on the other it went as the price of the spartan and meagre pleasures which were available to them because they did not have to sweat in the fields: the hard violent hunting and riding; the same pleasures: the one, gambling for worn knives and brass jewelry and twists of tobacco and buttons and garments because they happened to be easiest and quickest to hand; on the other for the money and horses, the guns and watches, and for the same reason; the same parties: the identical music from identical instruments, crude fiddles and guitars, now in the big house with candles and silk dresses and champagne, now in dirt-floored cabins with smoking pine knots and calico and water sweetened with molasses.

"They will endure. They are better than we are," Ike McCaslin says of the Negroes, although he finds it more painful to utter this heresy than it is to surrender his plantation. "Stronger than we are," he continues. "Their vices are vices aped from white men or that white men and bondage have taught them: improvidence and intemperance and evasion—not laziness . . . and their virtues are their own: endurance and pity and tolerance and forbearance and fidelity and love of children, whether their own or not or black or not." In Faulkner's novels, the Negroes are an element of stability and endurance, just as the octoroons (like Charles Bon and Joe Christmas) are an element of tragic instability. His favorite characters are the Negro cooks and matriarchs who hold a white family together: Elnora and Dilsey and Clytie and Aunt Mollie Beauchamp. After the Compson family has gone to pieces (in *The Sound and the Fury*), it is Dilsey the cook who endures and is left behind to mourn. Looking up at the square, unpainted house with its rotting portico, she thinks, "Ise seed de first and de last"; and later in the kitchen, looking at the cold stove, "I seed de first en de last."

The increasing hatred between two races is explained in Faulkner's novels partly by the heritage of slavery and Reconstruction; partly by the coming into power of a new class which, so far as

it consists of families with landless and slaveless ancestors, has a tradition of hostility to the Negroes. But Faulkner also likes to think that the lynch mobs were often led by the descendants of his old enemies, the carpetbaggers—

... that race threefold in one and alien even among themselves save for a single fierce will for rapine and pillage, composed of the sons of middle-aged Quartermaster lieutenants and Army sutlers and contractors in military blankets and shoes and transport mules, who followed the battles they themselves had not fought and inherited the conquest they themselves had not helped to gain . . . and left their bones and in another generation would be engaged in a fierce economic competition of small sloven farms with the black men they were supposed to have freed and the white descendants of fathers who had owned no slaves anyway whom they were supposed to have disinherited, and in the third generation would be back once more in the little lost county seats as barbers and garage mechanics and deputy sheriffs and mill and gin hands and power-plant firemen, leading, first in mufti then later in an actual formalized regalia of hooded sheets and passwords and fiery Christian symbols, lynching mobs against the race their ancestors had come to save.

III

Faulkner's novels of contemporary Southern life continue the legend into a period that he regards as one of moral confusion and social decay. He is continually seeking in them for violent images to convey his sense of despair. *Sanctuary* is the most violent of all his novels; it is also the most popular and by no means the least important (in spite of Faulkner's comment that it was "a cheap idea . . . deliberately conceived to make money"). The story of Popeye and Temple Drake has more meaning than appears on a first hasty reading—the only reading that most of the critics have been willing to grant it. George Marion O'Donnell went over the novel more carefully and decided that it

formed a coherent allegory. Writing in *THE KENYON REVIEW* (Autumn, 1939), he said that the pattern of the allegory was something like this:

Southern Womanhood Corrupted but Undeified (Temple Drake), in the company of the Corrupted Tradition (Gowan Stevens, a professional Virginian), falls into the clutches of amoral Modernism (Popeye), which is itself impotent, but which with the aid of its strong ally Natural Lust ("Red") rapes Southern Womanhood unnaturally and then seduces her so satisfactorily that her corruption is total, and she becomes the tacit ally of Modernism. Meanwhile Pore White Trash (Goodwin) has been accused of the crime which he, with the aid of the Naif Faithful (Tawmmy), actually tried to prevent. The Formalized Tradition (Horace Benbow), perceiving the true state of affairs, tries vainly to defend Pore White Trash. However, Southern Womanhood is so hopelessly corrupted that she willfully sees Pore White Trash convicted and lynched; she is then carried off by Wealth (Judge Drake) to meaningless escape in European luxury. Modernism, carrying in it from birth its own impotence and doom, submits with masochistic pleasure to its own destruction for the one crime that it has not yet committed—Revolutionary Destruction of Order (the murder of the Alabama policeman, for which the innocent Popeye is executed).

Mr. O'Donnell deserves very great credit as the first critic to discuss Faulkner as a moralist, the first to compare him in passing with Hawthorne, and almost the first to see that he is engaged in creating Southern myths. In his comments on *Sanctuary*, however, he has been entirely too ingenious. There is no doubt that his allegorical scheme can be read into the novel, but it hardly seems possible that the author intended to put it there. Faulkner tells us that *Sanctuary* was written "in about three weeks." It was completely rewritten two years later, in the effort "to make out of it something which would not shame *The Sound and the Fury* and *As I Lay Dying* too much"; but

I doubt that Faulkner had or took the time to give every character a double meaning. Lee Goodwin, for example, is not Pore White Trash, capitalized, but a tough, frightened moonshiner dishonorably discharged from the Army. Tawmmy is not the Naif Faithful, capitalized; he is simply faithful and stupid. If Temple Drake has any symbolic value, she represents the South as a whole, or the younger generation in the South, rather than Southern Womanhood (a phrase that makes Faulkner wince); but it is also quite possible that she represents nothing but a rather silly co-ed. Popeye, however, is another question; and at this point Mr. O'Donnell's reading is not only ingenious but comes very close to Faulkner's conscious or unconscious intention.

Popeye is one of several characters in Faulkner's novels who stand for something that might be called "amoral Modernism," considering that they are creatures of the time and have no social morality whatever; but it might also be called—more accurately, I think—the mechanical civilization that has invaded and partly conquered the South. Popeye is always described in mechanical terms: his eyes "looked like rubber knobs"; his face "just went awry, like the face of a wax doll set too near a hot fire and forgotten"; his tight suit and stiff hat were "all angles, like a modernistic lampshade"; and in general he had "that vicious depthless quality of stamped tin." He was the son of a professional strikebreaker, from whom he inherited syphilis, and the grandson of a pyromaniac. Like two other villains in Faulkner's novels, Joe Christmas and Januarius Jones, he had spent most of his childhood in an institution. He was the man "who made money and had nothing he could do with it, spend it for, since he knew that alcohol would kill him like poison, who had no friends and had never known a woman"—in other words, he was the compendium of all the hateful qualities that Faulkner assigns to finance capitalism. *Sanctuary* is not the connected allegory that Mr. O'Donnell presents in outline (he doesn't approve of

allegorical writing by novelists), but neither is it the accumulation of pointless horrors as which it has been dismissed by other critics. It is an example of the Freudian method turned backwards, being full of sexual nightmares that are in reality social symbols. In the author's mind, the novel is somehow connected with what he regards as the rape and corruption of the South.

And the descendants of the old ruling caste, in Faulkner's novels, have the wish but not the courage or the strength of will to prevent this new disaster. They are defeated by Popeye (like Horace Benbow), or they run away from him (like Gowan Stevens, who had gone to school at Virginia and learned to drink like a gentleman, but not to fight for his principles), or they are robbed and replaced in their positions of influence by the Snopeses (like old Bayard Sartoris, the president of the bank), or they drug themselves with eloquence and alcohol (like Mr. Compson), or they retire into the illusion of being inviolable Southern ladies (like Mrs. Compson, who says, "It can't be simply to flout and hurt me. Whoever God is, He would not permit that. I'm a lady."), or they dwell so much on the past that they are incapable of facing the present (like Reverend Hightower, of *Light in August*, who loses his wife and his church through living in a dream world), or they run from danger to danger (like young Bayard Sartoris) frantically seeking their own destruction. Faulkner's novels are full of well-meaning and even admirable people, not only the grandsons of the cotton aristocracy, but also pine-hill farmers and storekeepers and sewing-machine agents and Negro cooks and sharecroppers; but they are almost all of them defeated by circumstances and they carry with them a sense of their own doom.

They also carry, whether heroes or villains, a curious sense of submission to their fate. "There is not one of Faulkner's characters," says André Gide in his dialogue on "The New American Novelists," "who, properly speaking, has a soul"; and I think he means that not one of them exercises the faculty of con-

sconscious choice between good and evil. They are haunted, obsessed, driven forward by some inner necessity. Like Miss Rosa Coldfield (in *Absalom, Absalom!*), they exist in "that dream state in which you run without moving from a terror in which you cannot believe, toward a safety in which you have no faith." Or, like the slaves freed by General Sherman's army (in *The Unvanquished*), they follow the roads toward any river, believing that it will be their Jordan:

They were singing, walking along the road singing, not even looking to either side. The dust didn't even settle for two days, because all that night they still passed; we sat up listening to them, and the next morning every few yards along the road would be the old ones who couldn't keep up any more, sitting or lying down and even crawling along, calling to the others to help them; and the others—the young ones—not stopping, not even looking at them. "Going to Jordan," they told me. "Going to cross Jordan."

All Faulkner's characters, black and white, are a little like that. They dig for gold frenziedly after they have lost their hope of finding it (like Henry Armstid in *The Hamlet* and Lucas Beauchamp in *Go Down, Moses*); or they battle against and survive a Mississippi flood for the one privilege of returning to the state prison farm (like the tall convict in *The Wild Palms*); or, a whole family together, they carry a body through flood and fire and corruption to bury it in the cemetery at Jefferson (like the Bundrens in *As I Lay Dying*); or they tramp the roads week after week in search of men who had promised to marry them (like Lena Grove, the pregnant woman of *Light in August*); or, pursued by a mob, they turn at the end to meet and accept death (like Joe Christmas in the same novel). Even when they seem to be guided by a conscious design, like Colonel Sutpen, it is not something they have chosen by an act of will, but something that has taken possession of them: "... not what he wanted to do but what he just had to do, had to do it whether

he wanted to or not, because if he did not do it he knew that he could never live with himself for the rest of his life." In the same way, Faulkner himself writes, not what he wants to, but what he just has to write whether he wants to or not. And the effect produced on us by all these haunted characters, described in hypnagogic prose, is that of myths or fairy tales or dreams, where again the people act under compulsion, toward fatally predetermined ends.

In addition to being a fatalist, Faulkner is also an idealist, more strongly so than any other American writer of our time. The idealism disguises itself as its own opposite, but that is because he is deeply impressed by and tends to exaggerate the contrast between the life around him and the ideal picture in his mind. No other American writer makes such a use of negative turns of speech: his stories abound in words like "paintless," "lightless," "windowless," "not-feeling," "unvisioned." He speaks of "that *roadless* and even *pathless* waste of *unfenced* fallow and wilderness jungle—*no* barn, *no* stable, *not so much as* a hen-coop; just a log cabin built by hand and *no* clever hand either, a meagre pile of clumsily cut firewood sufficient for about one day and *not even* a gaunt hound to come bellowing out from under the house when he rode up." In the same story ("The Bear"), he speaks of ". . . the empty fields without plow or seed to work them, fenceless against the stock which did not exist within or without the walled stable which likewise was not there." He speaks of faces watching "without alarm, without recognition, without hope," and he speaks of the South under Reconstruction as "a lightless and gutted and empty land." Always in his mind he has an ideal picture of how the land and the people should be—a picture of painted, many-windowed houses, fenced fields, overflowing barns, eyes lighting up with recognition; and always, being honest, he measures that picture against the land and people he has seen. And both pictures are not only physical but moral; for always in the background of his novels is a sense of moral

standards and a feeling of outrage at their being violated or simply pushed aside. Seeing little hope in the future, he turns to the past, where he hopes to discover a legendary and recurrent pattern that will illuminate and lend dignity to the world about him. So it is that Reverend Hightower, dying in the dingy ruin of his plans, sees a vision of Bedford Forrest's troopers, who lived without question by a single and universally accepted code:

He hears above his heart the thunder increase, myriad and drumming. Like a long sighing of wind in trees it begins, then they sweep into sight, borne now upon a cloud of phantom dust. They rush past, forwardleaning in the saddles, with brandished arms, beneath whipping ribbons from slanted and eager lances; with tumult and soundless yelling they sweep past like a tide whose crest is jagged with the wild heads of horses and the brandished arms of men like the crater of the world in explosion. They rush past, are gone; the dust swirls skyward sucking, fades away into the night which has fully come. Yet, leaning forward in the window . . . it seems to him that he still hears them: the wild bugles and the clashing sabres and the dying thunder of hooves.

THE GUIDE

BY ANDREW LYTLE

THE big car rolled smoothly into the night. The sharp bright smudge of the headlights slid under the darkness with mathematical exactitude. Dressed in his hunting clothes, the boy sat beside his uncle and watched the road. He sat rather stiffly. His new boots, greased by his mother, prodded the boxes of shells piled carelessly onto the floor of the car. He was not comfortable. The shells gave him no easy rest for his feet, his clothes were strange in their bulk, and he could not make up his mind how to act with his Uncle Bomar. This was to him at the moment the most serious matter in the world. He tied himself into knots thinking about it. He rather felt that the childish deference to an elder was out of place now that they were going hunting together, and not merely hunting but to the Lake for ducks. The invitation was plainly Bomar's way of accepting him as a man. Bomar did not take boys duck shooting. Quail or dove hunting, but never duck. He had begged too often not to know. The boy felt that at last he was ready for a man's pleasures and responsibilities. This thought made him all the more anxious to behave as he should. This and the way his mother had seen them off.

But how was he to behave? Nobody had told him, just as nobody had told him what it meant to put on long pants. His mother had cried, his father had asked the cost, his grandfather had spouted Latin about the *toga virilis*. And his Brother Bob, all he had said was, "Keep it buttoned up, kid." "Of course I'll keep buttoned up," he had answered with shame and petulance, thinking only of the technical handling of the clothes. He knew at once he had made a mistake, even before he saw the smirk on his brother's face. Suddenly the long months of expectation, at last realized, turned bitter under his tongue and he

did not know rightly why. Vaguely and with confusion it came to him how narrow had been his understanding of what he had wanted. His wish had been little more than to masquerade in grown-up clothes. But the fact was another thing. Changing clothes had changed him. He felt the same and yet he was not the same. For days it puzzled him how this could be, then he gave it up as he grew accustomed to his new condition, but for a while longer he carried about him a feeling of unease. This made him sensitive and timid, so that he would cross over to the other side of the street rather than speak to someone he had known all his life.

The car took a curve. From the darkness a large stock barn with white doors appeared, disappeared. A board fence made a slapping noise as they passed down its narrow lane. He watched the posts go down like piles. The air sucked in, the fence was gone, and he knew they were entering poorer country.

"Tommy phoned me the big flights were coming in," Bomar said. "Had been for two days."

The boy stiffened in his seat, thinking desperately hard what reply a sportsman would make to such an important statement. The moment of his indecision dragged interminably, so that he blurted out, "You reckon they'll still be there?" His cheeks burned with shame at the over-eager, inadequate words.

"If the weather holds," Bomar replied in his slow, unexcitable voice. "It's got to be cold enough for the streams and back water to freeze over before the ducks come on to the Lake in any number. It's pretty cold. I expect they'll be there."

The boy leaned back in his seat. His uncle had answered him seriously. His question no longer seemed to him childish and ineffective. He even recovered from the humiliation of the leave-taking, his mother following them to the car, pulling his scarf about his neck, telling him not to get shot, not to take cold and to promise her, if his feet got wet, to tell the man to row him in, a few ducks is not worth pneumonia. . . . Great God,

Effie, the boy's going duck shooting, not to the North Pole. He had been grateful for Bomar's words then. He was more grateful now. They had not meant regret for asking him to come along. Maybe Bomar, too, knew what it was to be hindered by the solicitude of women.

The older man reached up and turned on the car's spot. He played it about the countryside, objects in the rough fields, then set it to the center of the road. The headlights swelled to a new fulness and the car took up speed. "A spot is a good thing to have in the country," Bomar said, as if his gesture needed some explanation.

"It sure is," the boy replied.

His uncle had turned as he spoke, turned easily, almost lazily, and yet all his movements showed perfect coördination. The boy felt a slight shock of surprise. His uncle was not so old a man as he had always thought, or rather he had never thought about his age at all. He had been Uncle Bomar, his mother's younger brother, sometimes whispered about in the family, but one of the opposition nevertheless who stood for authority, dullness, and obstacles to freedom. Except that he had never been so dull as the others. He had threatened older boys with Bomar's name and he would always let you go along to pick up doves. And Bomar had taken time to teach him how to shoot. He looked at the older man's eyes as if for the first time. They wore a look of furious haste which seemed out of keeping with his fleshy cheeks. As the boy looked more closely, it seemed to him that the fury had grown cold and the haste had set like the film over the racer's pupils as he is being led from the track, blinded to the shouting in the stands, to winning and losing, to all but the burning strain of the race and the gorged heart.

Bomar said, "You had better take that heavy coat off. You won't feel it in the morning. It gets cold as hell out on that Lake."

Hastily the boy took off the coat, for the second time thinking

bitterly of his mother, whom he had allowed in his ignorance to dress him as she had once done for parties and Sunday school, as if the whole affair were no more than a fashion parade. His uncle wore his good clothes. Hunters changed for the Lake after they got there.

"How do you think you will like it, kid?"

"Oh, fine," he said hastily. "I've always wanted to go. Old Jake used to tell me about grandfather Laus going there. He said he went in a wagon and it took him two weeks to go, and he always stayed two or three weeks hunting and fishing. Jake said he was a little boy, and they took him along to gather up fat pine and keep the fires."

"It's quite a difference these days," the older man said.

"Oh, yes, sir. When will we get there?"

"Well, we could make it tonight, but I think we'll stop off and sleep at Center. There's a good hotel there. The quarters at Hornbec are pretty rugged. And the guides keep you up drinking your whiskey."

"Oh," the boy said. He kept silent a moment, then resumed eagerly. "Jake said there were all kinds of hunting, and on one trip grandfather Laus brought back a live bear."

"The old boy must have been quite a sport."

"Oh, he was. Sometimes he would sleep under the trees, by a spring or creek. Jake said when he put up with people along the way, he would copy the design of a quilt he liked and have his wife make it when he got back home."

Bomar looked curiously at the boy at his side. "You seem to know a lot about that old guy. Which one was he?"

"He's the one that hangs to the right of the mantel in the living room."

"Let's see. That's the . . ."

"He hangs in the mahogany frame."

"Yeah. He was the one that was such a rounder."

"But he reformed. Mother says he received the mantle of

grace when the Methodists held their great revival and built a Church for his slaves."

"When the hell was that?"

"Oh, a long time ago. I don't know rightly."

"You might know it would be a long time. The United Daughters like'm dead."

The boy regarded his uncle with a puzzled expression. "You mean the United Daughters of the Confederacy, sir?"

"I mean all united daughters. The club don't make any difference. In union is strength. That's their battle cry. But hell, boy, you don't know what I'm talking about," Bomar said with impatience. "What I mean is the only man they'll have any truck with is a dead one. After a certain age, that is. The deader the better, if he's buried deep enough so he don't stink."

The boy nodded knowingly, although his head was awlirl. He had heard his father and his father's friends occasionally refer to women in disparaging terms. One spoke of women and preachers, he discovered, in the same tone of voice. It apparently was a thing one did to relieve certain difficult situations, but there was never a particular woman, or a particular preacher, named. The reference was invariably general. And his grandfather—only with him it was religion. He never spoke impolitely of ladies, but he could fling himself into a passion about the Church, especially at the dinner table when the conversation fell off. And his grandmother gave always the same reproving speech, in the same falsely affronted manner, "Don't blaspheme before these young men, Mr. Hancock." And Mr. Hancock would reply with righteous vehemence, "The truth, Madam, cannot blaspheme." None of this banter had he taken to mean anything, but with his Uncle Bomar he felt a difference. Bomar had actual women in mind and a grievance which seemed, however mysterious, real and vaguely threatening. He could not help but be disturbed the more he thought about Bomar's remark. Did he mean his own mother? She talked a great deal about her

family, living and dead. The truth heretofore hidden in things familiar confronted him: most of the people she talked about were dead.

After a while, in the silence which had fallen between the man and boy, Bomar said, "Forget it, kid." And the boy knew it was hard for him to speak, that inadvertently he had allowed talk which he considered unseemly to pass between them.

But he could not forget so easily. Considerations too disturbing to be summarily dismissed had been set loose in his head. Was it true that ladies of his mother's years thought only of the dead, or thought of them to the disfavor of the living? He was sure it could not be so with his mother. The tales she told never called to mind the dead but only the very dearest of kin who perhaps lived too far away to visit. Above all was this true of grandfather Laus, whom she set him for example. "Hold your head up and step lightly," she would say and he knew who it was she had in mind. Or, "Always be able to look any man in the eye." And again, "Think what you please but never speak loosely and you'll have nothing to take back." These admonitions he was conscious of but never in the forefront of his mind. They underlay and gave firm texture to all he found delightful in his great-grandfather's life, and he somehow knew that had they been lacking the stories which won his heart would have seemed less true. But now that he thought of things in a way he never had thought before, all which touched him dearly lay bright and clear before his vision, the beginning, the middle, and the end clarified in a burst of illumination, where the parts were the whole and the whole defined the parts. And so it came to him that from his mother he got most of the admonitions but the stories he had from his grandfather or from Jake.

The near duel with General Jackson he liked best of all, for the two friends were parted over a horse race. This seemed to him right and fitting, for only some such great occasion was proper cause to break the bonds between two "gentlemen who held each

other in the highest esteem." The story as it was told, without directly accusing the General, was told to his discredit. Large sums had been placed on the race. In the last half mile the General's horse was gaining, when his grandfather Laus's horse threw his rider and crossed the finishing line several lengths ahead of his rival. Proud of himself, he turned to the stand where his master sat, and whinnied. At this point in the story his grandfather would pause dramatically. "The spectators to a man rose and cheered the gallant animal." But of course no riderless horse could win a race. Words passed, just what words he was never told, a challenge was given and taken, but the night before the morning of the duel friends intervened and the matter was disposed of to the honor of both parties. "Else," his grandfather would say, "Else," he would repeat, looking significantly about him, "the history of our nation had been played out in different fashion."

Tall, gallant, and forever young, this was the man whose image he carried, not that of the picture in the mahogany frame. That never made him think of grandfather Laus. It looked like the dead or would have so looked if the straight-glancing eyes had been closed. But they narrowed too sharply out of some great reserve, above the stiff neck and stock and the black broadcloth coat. He could never imagine the man in the picture lying under the trees, wrapped in a bear skin, with the shine of the camp fire on his face and the sound of the hobbled horses grazing in the dark. The grandfather who was hunter was the man he liked to think about. Now he was going over the same road he had taken and to the Lake where he had had such great sport with all kinds of game. The road was changed, there was no more a forest, but the Lake at least would still be wild and the guides simple, noble men.

"Wake up, kid, we're here."

He opened wide his eyes, but for a moment his senses delayed.

Startled, he thought the car was drawing up before the hotel in Center under its large neon sign glowing evilly red in the darkness. Here the night before they had stepped out of the frosty air into the shabby newness of the lobby, had been shown to their room by a grey-haired elevator boy. It had seemed to him that he had scarcely closed his eyes before his uncle was shaking him awake. Behind the desk the proprietor greeted them. He was dressed in hunting clothes. His eyes were bright as a bird's and he jerked about like a mechanical toy as he cocked his head to one side and talked glibly of the shooting, but what he wanted to find out was whether they would be back that night. "Bastard," Bomar said as they turned away. It was still dark as they passed a second time under the neon sign. The car was white and glistened in the dark. The exhaust made a loud noise in the deserted street. In the distance he had heard an ash can clattering. . . .

"Well, here we are," Bomar said and got out of the car with a motion which was quick for a man his size. He called into the darkness, "Anybody seen Tommy?"

A voice answered, "He stepped up to his house. He'll be on down in a little."

"Are we really here?" The boy asked. He noticed that he had lowered his voice. His uncle had spoken right out.

"This is Hornbec. There's the Lake over there."

The boy glanced towards a rough pier, but it was all dark beyond and he could see nothing of the water. They walked up the narrow street which bordered the Lake. Lights from the windows and door of a plain two-storey building glared from its porch and threw a milky shadow onto the steps. But the light did not penetrate, although he could see his uncle's face and the half-solid forms of men stirring busily around him. He was wide awake now, with the cold wind from the Lake blowing his face, but he felt as if he were acting in a dream, where all was topsy-turvy yet all seemed natural. It was this very naturalness

of things which made him feel as he did: people going about their business, talking in a normal voice, but all in the dead of night.

"Let's go in the hotel," Bomar said.

Inside it was warm and bright. Some dozen men dressed in their hunting clothes, several of them in hip boots, sat around a pot-bellied stove. It was red hot about its middle. He shivered and walked over to warm himself.

"How about a little breakfast, Nelly?" Bomar called out and walked into the long dining room.

The walls were plain and unfinished. Most of the tables were in disarray and he could see that the guests of the hotel had already eaten. Where he sat, there were crumbs on the cloth and somebody had spilled catsup. The woman Nelly came in with fried eggs shining white with grease, thick bacon, large thick biscuits, and coffee in heavy china cups. She flung her head and shoulders about as she walked. The boy thought he had never seen less sense in a face, but he could see the hunters liked her or at least that she thought the hunters liked her.

"Good old Nelly. She won't let us starve," Bomar called out with too loud a heartiness and grabbed playfully at her waist. She tossed her head and flung herself out of the way, but her wide bright eyes grew brighter.

"Quit, now-wah," she said.

The brazen stupidity in her dare that was not a dare chilled his spirits. The eggs were cold, but he ate the bacon and poured a lot of milk and sugar in his coffee and drank it. The coffee was steaming hot.

"Paul's wife may come up with him today," Bomar said to the girl.

"I hope she does."

"Do you now?"

"Why not. I ain't got nothing to hide."

"No. Nothing to hide. Nothing at all."

"That's right."

"Who did I see kissing you?"

"He was jest being jolly."

"Yeah. Jolly. Good old jolly Paul."

"That's right," she said. "Jolly and friendly. You all want lunches?"

"Sure. You want us to go hungry on that Lake?"

"I didn't know. I thought maybe you'd brought lunches with you."

Bomar turned to his nephew. "This hotel thinks it's got a monopoly."

"We don't care where you stay." Her head came up. A light flush at the cheek bones rushed to her eyes. For the first time the woman seemed real to the boy. His mother had told him that plain people were quick to take offense but it was her show of pride which gave her being, and he understood that it was a thing she held in common with those around her as she shared a speech which his mother called country.

"Well, will you be here tonight?" she continued.

Bomar paused. "Yeah. The kid and I'll be here."

"I jest wanted to know. I have to plan about supper."

She left the dining room, and the man and boy ate hurriedly and in silence. From the other room they heard spurts of talk. None of it flowed easily, as happens with men who are idling. It jabbed at the silence, a silence enclosing a time of waiting upon action, when the mind grows fearful lest its edge grow dull from images. The boy was trying to catch the drift of the talk. He had not heard the soft steps approaching. He heard only the words, "Now if you ain't a pretty bastard."

He stiffened and waited for the blow which Bomar in all honor must give. He waited a second. There was no stirring of the chair. He raised his eyes upon his uncle's smiling, placid features.

Bomar's lips were moving. "You ain't no handsome son-of-a-bitch yourself," they said.

"Getting in here this time of day. You drive all night?"

"Hell, no. We stopped off at Center to get a few hours sleep."

"What you think you are, a goddam tourist?"

"You got an interest in this hotel?"

"Hell, no. It's just the company you keep. When I want to sleep in a whore house, I don't want no pimp to show me my bed. That mealy-mouthed bastard dressing up like a hunter to catch the suckers like you, only I didn't know you was a sucker before. And they'll steal there, too."

"Hell, Applegate."

"Hell they don't. Last week a man from Indiana lost his purse with ninety-seven dollars in it."

"You're just afraid he'll take away your business."

"Hell. None of the guides around here will go up there. And we don't let him down here."

Bomar turned to his nephew. "Kid, shake hands with Tommy Applegate."

The boy rose and gave the small heavy-set man his hand. He was a little dazed. Bastard and son-of-a-bitch were fighting words, not friendly greetings. He didn't understand. He knew his uncle had fought for less, much less. And he well knew that no such greeting would have passed between grandfather Laus and his lean, weathered guide, when they met again at the return of the hunting season. But of course there were no professional guides in those days. The people who lived about the Lake at that time hunted or trapped for a living. They might go along with a friend out of pure courtesy, or for companionship, but he was sure they took no money for it. But it was not money either. It was the greeting which shocked and puzzled him. For a second his hand gripped the guide's hand. He felt the inert calloused flesh, and the strength within, near the bone, but there was no response to his clasp. The man was not being unfriendly, but as he drew away the boy felt he had been rebuffed. Later he remembered the eyes. They were brown, which

he did not expect. And there was something else, something wrong about them. They lacked the sharpness of a hunter's eyes.

"We are about ready to shove off, kid," Bomar interrupted. "We're going to the first pocket. Tommy got you a good guide. Watch him, though, or he'll shoot up too many of your shells. And you give him this at the end of the day."

The boy looked at the money. "All of this, Uncle Bomar?"

"Yeah, I know. It's too damn much, but it's what they charge."

Outside the darkness was thinning. The Lake spread out for a way like a black floor. The boy hesitated on the edge of the porch. His clothes were slick from the cold, but the blood charged through his body. It seemed a trivial thing that he had worried at not finding the place and the people what he had expected, for the surroundings are nothing. The only thing that mattered was the shoot. Hunters passed him on the steps, all with a common purpose, the same thoughts, the same sense of excitement and expectation. He could feel it as they went by. One or two looked curiously at him. He knew he must go on or they would think him strange, but still he delayed to savor the full measure of the experience before it was played out by the act. All this stir, the time of day, the learning of the guides, the rich men who hunted, who came from places where their word was law, others who came out of some urgent need they did not rightly understand—all of them now and in his great-grandfather's day, were guided, were governed by the instincts of a bird. Bomar half turned. "Where are you?" he called sharply.

"Coming," the boy answered and hurried down the steps. He noticed that Bomar's bulky clothes spreading out over his hips enlarged them. He looked from the rear like his mother.

At the water's edge two boats were drawn close into the bank. Tommy was standing in one. Bomar was handing him his gear.

"Your gun unloaded?" Tommy asked.

"You know I wouldn't hand you any loaded gun," Bomar replied.

"Be God-damned sure. I don't want you to blow my ass off."

"Don't put it where it'll get wet."

"If it gets wet, you'll get wet. Hand me that sack of charcoal."

"Your arm's not broke. Pick it up."

"What's the matter with your back? Been riding it too much?"

"My back's all right. This is Jack Daniel's number seven. Catch it."

"Three's my lucky number."

"Well, this will more than double your luck. Won't it, Goosetree?"

A man looked up from blowing the charcoal burner in the adjoining boat. The light from the charcoal showed a pair of flat eyes, with sharp points at their centers. Even in the steady red glow his features seemed pale. He said dryly, "He'll double your drinks."

"This is the kid, Goosetree, that's going with you," Bomar said.

The man nodded. "They'll make the noise, sonny," he said. "We'll bring in the meat."

"Hell," Tommy said with heavy scorn.

"I've got the gun will do it," Goosetree added. "And this boy looks like he can shoot."

"You may get a mud hen or two."

"I'm going to hole up at the point. We'll bring'm in."

"Bring in my ass," Tommy said.

"Now that ud be a right heavy load."

The boy no longer felt ill at ease with these people. At first he had been repelled by their obscenities. The words had struck him with all the force of their literal meaning. And in his disgust there had been fear, not so much of the men and the place, as of his own sensations. All things he had found different from

his imaginings. Bomar's unintended remarks in the car had begun it. He had got in beside his uncle, never doubting that things could ever be otherwise than as they seemed. He had found that even a fact about which there could not be the slightest uncertainty, such as Bomar's eyes, was not a fact at all. Almost without attending it, so fast did it happen, one certainty after another had slipped away from him until he felt exposed in all his privacy. Now this in some way had changed. He had scarcely listened to the guide's talk. He watched them get the boats set for the shoot. What they did went quickly, but there was no haste to their movements, and their banter was spoken with as little attention to the meaning as the congregation repeating the doxology on Sunday.

Goosetree straightened up. His movement was unmistakable. There came a pause and Bomar turned hastily. "Now, kid," he said, "you got to lead these duck."

"Like doves?"

"Yeah. Maybe further. I can't tell you exactly. You'll have to judge. But when they come flying in at you, shoot at their bills." He stepped into the boat. "All ready, me lads?"

"We been ready," Goosetree replied.

The boy sat forward in the boat, astraddle the charcoal burner. There was barely room for his legs and he had to watch to see that his boots didn't burn. They pushed off and he thought surely the ice must chew up the bottom of the boat. The going got better after a while, but every now and then the guide had to strike the ice several times before he could set the oars to water. The darkness thinned and the cold began to bite into him. It had a different quality over water. He felt weight as well as chill. He wore two wool shirts, a heavy wool coat and next to his body close-knit woolen underwear, but it went through all these garments like air through a sack in a broken window light. He got to wondering if he could stand it all day and leaned forward to rub his hands over the open mouth of the burner.

His teeth began to chatter and he drew down his chin so it wouldn't be seen. He could hear Bomar and Tommy. Their voices had the flat clear sound of coming from a distance and yet they were not far away. And then he looked up. . . . Dawn had swamped the sky. There was no light and yet he could see. He was first conscious of a wonderful ease to his eyes. Wide open, without a thread's strain, they saw everywhere through the colorless haze. Never had he been able to see so clearly and so far. He thought it must be like this with animal eyes at night or whenever they hunt, to see and not know they are seeing, when the vision and prey are made one for the spring. A wonderfully fresh strength streamed through his body. All things seemed at a beginning. It was the world on the first day.

The boat struck a snag. He looked more closely about. Black slick tree trunks stuck up out of the water like the splintered piles of a pier which has rotted away. Occasionally they passed a stump that was still alive, but its stunted growth only made the desolate surroundings more forbidding. And the Lake, he saw, was forbidding. Miles upon miles of saw grass, more grass than water, and everywhere the illusion of solid ground. Slimey ooze, even quicksand, was its floor. His first elation drained away. He told himself the place was not meant for man. It was more foreign and distant to his experience than the most outlandish reaches of human habitation. Over him came a great and terrible loneliness.

The boats entered an open pocket of frozen water. His boat began to rock and he grasped the sides.

"Give with the boat," Goosetree commanded.

"What's the matter, Mr. Goosetree?"

"Nothings the matter. I'm breaking the ice."

"What for?"

"To throw out the blocks." Goosetree's voice made him feel the depth of his ignorance.

The ice broke up in sheets and the boat sloshed it out of the

way. Into the open water the guide began to throw his decoys. He unwound the string, glanced at the water with quick precision and then threw out the painted block. In no time the false birds rode their anchors in front of the blind. Goosetree now drove the boat into the edge of the grass. He handed the boy a pole. "When I pull, you push on that," he said and stepped into the water. His hip boots sank down and he said, "All right." At each push the boat slid further into the blind. Empty shells and cigarette butts soiled the flattened tufts of grass. One cigarette, scarcely smoked, touched the water, its damp brown insides spilling and staining the paper. A smear of lipstick gashed its upper end. Instinctively the boy averted his gaze. A blot formed in the blue-gray haze, hung for a moment to the air, desperately, noiselessly fluttering its wings, turned and disappeared. Motionless, he watched the spot where it had been, feeling he could almost have touched the duck, if duck it was, for how could its wings beat so and not make a sound?

"I reckon it's hid," Goosetree said.

"No, it just melted away," the boy replied.

Goosetree's eyes came on guard. The boy said hastily. "Oh, the boat. Yes, sir, it looks hid."

"What'd you think I meant?"

"I didn't hear you well."

He felt that his guide was studying him, trying to make up his mind whether he was responsible enough to risk in the close quarters they must keep. At last Goosetree pulled himself out of the water and began to prepare the boat for action. He set the burner between them, changed the seats so that they faced each other, set his lunch beside him, his water bottle to the rear. He took bunches of grass from both sides and tied them together over the boat. Carefully he loaded his gun and set it down pointing into the grass. He loaded the boy's and handed it to him. "Point it that way," he said, "and always keep the safety on until you get up to shoot. And don't get up until I tell you."

"Where are Uncle Bomar and Tommy gone?" he asked.

The guide was dropping charcoal into the burner. "They went to the other side of the pocket." He leaned over to blow the coals. The boy noticed that his hands were black and his face sooty from handling the coal. When the fire suited him, he dropped a tomato can over the low tin chimney, then rose in the boat. He stood with his body half bent and with a short jerk of the head looked up. A shadow passed over his eyes as he flicked them across the arc of the sky.

"See anything?" the boy asked.

"They'll be in," he replied.

Then they sat in silence, leaning towards each other over the burner. Around the boat, out of the grass, the cold boiled up through a slimy mist. Now that they were settled and waiting the boy felt his body relax and his head grow dull. He was wondering how he could get up from his cramped quarters in time to shoot. He did not see the guide rise. He heard the shot and looked up, his heart fluttering, in time to see the red feet draw up under the white belly, see the inert body slanting to the Lake.

"When they hit the ice, they don't git up no more," Goose-tree said. He added, "I seen him too late to call you."

His first feeling was chagrin and resentment. A guide should give others a chance to shoot. But in his heart he knew he had been a bad hunter. Too much excitement had worn him out. He must learn how to wait, be idle and still wound up, like a spring. That was it. Like a spring.

"There they come," Goosetree hissed.

"Where?" he breathed.

"A Susie. In front of you."

Almost overhead and to the left he saw the duck. The spring in him snapped. He heard the report of his gun, saw the bird falter, fly for a hundred yards and then go down. He shot at another passing to his front, missed, shot and missed again. He tried to aim but his eyes felt frozen and wide open. His gun

and Goosetree's went off together. The bird stopped short in flight and fell straight down. For the first time Goosetree smiled.

"I missed the second shot," the boy said and his voice was trembling and his throat dry.

"You didn't lead him enough. The air from your load fanned his tail."

"We both shot at the same time. Think we both got him. I expect you got him."

"It was a teal," Goosetree said, glancing swiftly around. The sky seemed to open out of his eyes.

It seemed a long time before the next ducks flew over. At last he heard, "There!" He grabbed his gun, half rose. "Git down," the guide ordered and hastily put his hands to his mouth and called, the reedy imitation of the duck's cry rasping the air. The call seemed too urgent to the boy, faster than a bird would make. The birds dipped and turned, then flew away.

"No use aiming. Whenever they see you, it's too late."

"Did they see me?"

"Hell, yes. Never get up until you're ready to shoot."

The nasal call to death and the sound of guns travelled from different parts of the Lake, gradually drifted into silence until the whole world grew as still as the painted ducks riding their anchors in the pool of rotten ice. He and the guide were close enough to touch. The intimacy which was not intimacy began to close in on him. He felt that he ought to say something. He said, "Is your son going to follow in your footsteps, Mr. Goosetree?"

"Hell, no. There's no money in guiding. Soon's he's old enough I'm going to send him to college."

"I would think this was a wonderful life," the boy said in surprise, "being able to hunt or fish every day and get paid for it."

"It gits stale, up before day freezing your balls off sloshing around in this ice."

The guide picked up a jug of milky water and poured it into

a pan and set the pan on the open mouth of the burner. "I'll make us some coffee," he said. "And we can eat." The ducks won't be back until about eleven o'clock. I've noticed that's the time they been coming in."

He measured the coffee and dumped it into the water, took a dirty rag and carefully wiped out two cups and put them beside him. Then he took a spoon and began to stir the coffee and blow the coals. "No," he said, "it's hard on you. I'm going to quit it soon. I bought me the finest summer house ever built around this Lake. Old man Simpkins built it, a rich lumber man from Mississippi. He spent eight thousand dollars on it. Built it of pine and not a knot in it, plumbing, lights, frigidaire, and good water. I heard his widow wanted to sell and I let her know by the woman who looks after it that I might, might mind you, try to buy it. So old lady Simpkins called me long distance. And I asked her what she wanted for it and she commenced telling me how much she'd put in it. I cut her off. I said I'll give you two thousand cash for it. She couldn't listen to any such figure, it was giving it away. Two thousand's my offer. Take it or leave it. She hung up on me. But a week later I got a letter from her son saying his mother couldn't bear to come up here no more since her old man had went away and that they'd close the deal." Goosetree poured a cup of coffee and handed it to the boy. "I'd of give twenty-five hundred as easy as I give two thousand." He unwrapped a sandwich. "I'm going to build two cabins, put a toilet and shower in em, they's eight rooms to the house, and rent by the week or month. A man and his wife can come up and fish. They come sometime with women they claim to be their wives. There'll be money in it."

"How many'd you get?" a voice from the Lake asked.

It was Bomar and Tommy. Goosetree rose. "Aw, we got'm, boys. How many'd you knock down?"

"None," Tommy said. His face was grave and averted, as though still turned from the incomprehensible workings of Fate.

"We shot twice, but they were too high," Bomar added apologetically.

Tommy began throwing out his decoys.

"Don't throw them blocks out here," Goosetree said.

Tommy rowed about, continuing to throw them out. He asked, "Don't we work together?"

"Hell. The quarters is too close."

Bomar said in his slow, soothing voice, "Goosetree, I believe you are afraid we'll outshoot you."

"Who's got the duck?"

"Well, how many did you get?"

"Three," Goosetree said, his voice less belligerent.

"I really got one, Uncle Bomar. On the nose."

"Fine, kid."

"Yes, sir, this boy's gonna knock'm," Goosetree said. The boy felt a glow of pleasure. He was beginning to think more of his guide.

Tommy masked his boat in the grass behind the others.

"You want some coffee?" Goosetree asked.

"We got something better'n coffee," Tommy replied.

"Here, take a drink," Bomar said.

Tommy turned up the bottle. His Adam's apple worked like a piston as the bright brown liquid flowed down his throat. He wiped the mouth of the bottle on his sleeve and returned it casually. "Warms you better than any charcoal," he said matter-of-factly.

From where he reclined in the boat Bomar took a drink. The boy noticed it was much less than Tommy took. "How about it, Goosetree?"

"I got ulcers. Drinking too much in Arkansas," Goosetree replied. "Hod, but that stuff lightened you as it went down. Set your tail on fire."

"Kid?"

"No, thank you, sir." The boy knew by the way the whiskey

was offered that he was supposed to refuse, but he mightily wanted to taste it. He drank his coffee instead and took a bite out of a ham sandwich. There was too much bread for the meat and he threw away the top slice.

"My daddy tole me to stay out'n Arkansas," Goosetree continued.

"Ain't nothing there," Tommy added sourly.

"I went over there to a duck-calling contest oncet. I called as purty as ever you please." Goosetree added bitterly, "They give the prize to a eleven-year-old boy."

"Ain't nothing for nobody in Arkansas," Tommy said.

The boy tried another sandwich, peanut butter and jelly spread together on the bread. It tasted good. At least it wasn't so dry. He finished his coffee and felt better for the food.

"Tommy, where are these duck you called me about?"

Tommy looked shocked at the question and glanced over the Lake towards the woods. "They're roosting on the reserve," he said.

"Government birds, eh?" Bomar said. "Well, they'll sit on their fat asses until we starve to death."

Tommy looked even more serious. "They'll come out after a while," he said.

"That was humor, Applegate. You wouldn't recognize it, though. It bore no reference to fornication."

Bomar drank again and passed the whiskey to his guide. Tommy took it and turned it up in one motion. He swallowed like a thirsty man drinking water. "That's seven times seven," he said. "What does it make?"

"You drunk," Bomar replied.

"It'll make you holler." He opened his mouth and his voice rang lustily over the Lake.

Bomar examined his companion's face for a moment. "Applegate," he said, "if you had rings in your ears, you'd look like a damn pirate."

Tommy shouted again. "Hi-yo!"

The boy thought he did look like a pirate, anyway like a foreigner, the way his eyes didn't suit his rough, swarthy features but looked both boldly and evasively at the same time. With Mr. Goosetree it was different. He looked like a guide ought to look, although he was a little small and didn't think much of guiding, which was a disappointment the boy didn't explore but which lay uneasily in the back of his head. But Tommy at least was human and it was somehow because of his eyes. Watching the sky, they absorbed it like a blotter. Maybe it was this which made him seem always on guard. When Mr. Goosetree looked at the sky, he skinned it.

"Hi-yo!" Tommy shouted again. As if suddenly spent by the shouting, he said, "My daddy was a Jew and my mother an Indian. Now ain't that a hell of a combination?"

He had half turned away. Bomar looked at him but said nothing. Tommy continued in a conversational tone. "He used to trade up and down this country. I reckon he made a pretty good living until he took to drinking. When I was a shirt-tail boy, he'd come in on Saturday nights and run all of us out of the house. I sort of liked it in summer, like a kid will. My mother would bed us down in the leaves and moss. It didn't seem to worry her much. I reckon Indians are sort of used to the woods. There was generally plenty to eat. She made a good truck patch. She'd take the littlest one and go out in the corn when it was tasselling and sing to it. Homesick kind of a singing. As I got older, I didn't like it so much. Looked like he didn't do so well trading. He'd come in during the week drunk and beat her up. She never hollered, but if he tried to take his scantling to one of us young-uns, she'd scratch and bite him like a cat.

"I was about eleven, I guess. We still had plenty to eat, well not a plenty but enough. She always managed to keep us in victuals, but we was all ragged. It takes money to buy clothes. He wasn't doing no trading at all, except he'd take her corn and

swap it for licker. Well, he come a night of the worst blizzard that ever you saw, mean drunk and dirty. He looked like he'd been laying out for a week. He commenced cussin' and stumbling around and hollered, 'Clear all these half breeds outer here.' I said, 'Daddy, I don't aim to go out in no blizzard.' His red eyes kind of bulged at me. He picked a old table leg that was laying around and come toward me. I raised the gun. He still kept coming. I let him have it right in the belly." Tommy's voice ceased. He said after awhile, "Sober, he wasn't no mean-natured kind of a man."

Without saying anything Bomar passed the whiskey over to Tommy. Nobody spoke again for a long while. Goosetree had covered himself up and gone to sleep. Bomar lay back, reclining in the boat. The day had advanced but there was no sun to relieve the cold. The frozen clouds stretched tight across the sky. After a while the boy became conscious of Bomar's soothing voice. It flowed too smoothly. It was getting confidential. He recognized the signs. Miserable from the cold and the long, trying wait, he felt the shoot would be a failure. Nobody would watch for the ducks, maybe there wouldn't be any more to come in. He felt the need to stand up. It was a little less cold up in the air. There was not a duck in the sky. He looked down and his blood danced. Three were playing in the water before a jutting strip of the grass. "Look, Tommy," he cried.

"Mud hens," Tommy said and sat back down.

Bomar had turned where he lay. His eyes were gay. "What," he asked, "would the old boy, what's his name, Menelaus, say if he knew his grandson had taken a mud hen for a duck. The pious Menelaus, our noble ancestor, unequalled in the arts of field and stream and Ovid's pupil. What would he say, kid?"

He was too surprised to say anything—Bomar wondering about grandfather Laus, too, for it was plain that he only pretended to recollect his name. . . .

"Never, oh, never, would that nonpareil, that prince among

men, that cock of the walk, have mistaken a mud hen for a duck. Or so we're told. What I like, Applegate, about this revered ancestor of mine and the kid's, was his timing. Now I know that timing is everything, but damn if I can bring it off. But this guy Menelaus did. When he was young, he went the rounds. When it came time to settle down, he didn't settle, but nobody held it against him, least of all his large female connection. He hunted when he wanted to, he had plenty of money, he played the races and was a family man all at the same time. He was a genius, Applegate. And while he stepped high, wide and handsome, his Helen stayed at home making quilts and raising his young. That's the way to do it, Applegate. Be fruitful and multiply. And don't forget the quilts. He didn't. He made it a point to keep her in fresh patterns, just in case. . . . And then when he had dropped all the grains of corn from one jar to the other and it was time to change'm back, he saw the light. At a camp meeting at Walnut Grove the dove, not the kind you're thinking about, Applegate, but the blessed, the miraculous dove, came bearing the twig of salvation." He paused. His voice had grown harder as he spoke. "Don't take it hard, kid, you're not the first to take a wooden nickel."

He couldn't make heads or tails of what his uncle was saying. What did a wooden nickel have to do with it? It was very important. He could tell by Bomar's voice. Before he could try to figure it out, Tommy interrupted.

"There was a lady here fishing once named Helen," Tommy said. "She come here with a doctor from Chicago. They claimed they was married, but I been rowing a long time. These two didn't much care whether they caught anything or not. She wasn't having much luck and I said,—I wasn't thinking anything—'diddle on this side.' I meant her hook of course, and she said, 'What? Right there?' and giggled. You know, it was the way she giggled. And the doctor, he laughed too. They did a sight of loose laughing. Tommy leaned over and stirred the

charcoal in the burner. "When I first took up guiding people, didn't no women come here to hunt or fish."

Bomar raised his bottle, "Here's to Argive Helen and all her kin."

The boy felt the boat move. Goosetree was awake and staring at Bomar's large, well-wrapped body. "Look at him," he said, "laying over there like a fattening hog."

Far away, over near the island a lone gun shot once. It made no more noise than a popgun but the men in the two boats grew very quiet. Then all rose to their feet. Goosetree took out his watch. "Eleven twenty," he said.

The importunate duck calls, still at a distance, now buzzed like insects. More guns went off over by the reserve. The firing was scattered. Then somebody said, "Get down." The boy didn't see anything and he got panicky. "Coming over you." "Where, where?" he asked in a tight voice. And then all four of them were shooting furiously. He thought he hit one but he wasn't sure. Two of the ducks turned and flew over a blind across the channel. The hunters there shot up a lot of shells but the ducks went on their way. Goosetree called out, "You want my gun?" His voice was taunting and cheerful. "You can have my gun if you want it."

"How about that for shooting, Applegate?" Bomar asked. His voice was even and full.

"Boy, you stopped him."

"Didn't I stop him, though?"

"Did you? A mallard, too."

"Purty good shooting," Goosetree said. "But look over here in the water."

"Here's where to look," Tommy called back. "Them ducks jest killed theyselves, but we had to shoot to bring'm down."

"Hell."

"We're hitting them, ain't we?" Bomar said.

"Watch it, boys," Goosetree snapped.

Down in the boat Tommy was calling. The hunters across the channel called. The boy crouched and watched the bird, the bending wings, the red feet drawn in. . . . The duck dipped and dove toward the water. The world vanished. There was nothing but space, a streak in space. The moving bolt was all. His ears crashed, the thud against his shoulder, another crash, the red feet gashed the white breast. The dead body dropped and the world was.

"Not bad, kid."

"I think you got him, Uncle Bomar."

"Hard to say. We shot together."

The two of them, the boy and his uncle, were alone in the boat. They watched the guides row from place to place, gathering in the ducks. At last the long full day was over. Behind the island the darkness crouched. As if sensing the hunters could no longer shoot, the ducks now lighted everywhere around them. "God, God . . ." Bomar whispered. Then the guides turned their boat about. It sped toward the hunters. Quietly the water parted about the prow, quietly closed behind the rippling wake. No sign of passage marred its surface—waiting to receive the falling night.

"It's been a good shoot," Bomar said evenly. "But it's over."

The boy turned towards his uncle. What he saw made him raise his hand, as though for support. Bomar stood erect and waiting. His eyes were regarding the boy: they were the eyes in the mahogany frame.

THE CONSPIRACY

By ROSEMARY PARIS

THE children lay in their bunks with the cabin door open. It was hot and the darkness smelled of oil from the engine room. They heard the glass over the wash-basin clink rhythmically and, beyond the narrow cabin, the swish of waves along the boat's hull; on deck there was the sound of occasional voices.

The boat, on its overnight journey, carried them steadily away from the banyan tree and swing in the front yard and the gully nearby where the railroad trestle was built for climbing. They leaned out of their bunks, staring through the cabin door to watch for the lights that blinked from time to time across the sea, listening to the unfamiliar noises and the sharp intermittent clang of the ship's bells.

When morning came it brought rain drizzling upon a low gray shoreline with mountains rising from it into the clouds. The boat slid up to a dock built out into the water where a knot of people, hunched against the rain, stood on its farthest point and waved their limp leis of maile and ginger. The sea rose and fell slowly around the dock's thick piles.

The body of a soldier who had drowned during the night lay under a blanket on the beach while the children clung to the railing and stared. He had been fished out and arranged there to wait for goodness knows what, with sand in his hair and in his mouth. They lost sight of him when they walked down the gangplank into the great dim vault of the warehouse, but later the train ran along the beach and they saw him again, lying under his drenched blanket, with the waves crawling up the beach below him and his feet jutting up in a triangle.

They went to live in the big house set among pines, always shadowed and moist and grown about with long damp grass that

reached up the walls toward the sloping roof of corrugated iron. The house grew in the obscurity of the trees like a giant mushroom, with a sheen of water on it, foul, and yet cleanly and precisely shaped. The walls in the rooms of the house were patterned by water and the air smelled of fleshy growing things. All the airing in the world and the putting upon window sills of pillows and mattresses would not get rid of it.

The children were at once astir. While the tumult of exploration and unpacking went on in the house they escaped with their two pet turtles, safe in a shoe box. There was a monstrous white shell placed like a sentinel at the front door. The pink, convoluted and glossy interior received the turtles like a mouth held open. The turtles slithered down into their new home, but before they were quite out of sight the children hurried off through the dripping ferns and across the pine-needled ground.

They found a cottage and a sound of crying. The cottage had windows set at ground level so that they could see in through thick dust and cobwebs to the room hollowed out of the ground. With their noses squeezed against the glass pane the children peered through the curtain of webs to a cot in one corner of the room. A Japanese girl lay there, sprawled grotesquely, with her face pressed into the mattress and the crying muffled by it. She lifted her large swaying head and looked back at the children. Her face was swollen and her mouth hung open unnaturally so that the saliva and tears mingled. Her thick black hair hung in tatters over her forehead. She stopped crying.

The children did not at first see a woman come from the door of the cottage to stand quietly behind them. She caught them quite unawares as she began to shriek with rage. It was a storm of abuse that sent them flying back from the windows, at once guilty and startled. Her dark face contorted with anger was suspended in the air before them with the mouth writhing. They ran as fast as they could over the wet ground, pine needles sticking to their bare feet.

The next day the turtles were gone. The shell had swallowed them deep into some mysterious rosy interior or spewed them out into the ferns that glistened after the night's rain. The children rocked the shell back and forth in rage, but there was no cheerful answering rattle of small turtle. The white impassive shell kept its secret from the children and no rocking however prolonged could shake it loose.

The children began to run fearfully, on tiptoes, when they played, turning their heads to see everywhere at once. In the night they remembered the soldier under his blanket and the turtles, homeless somewhere and no longer hungry for the dried insects in the shoe box. Sometimes the girl's crying woke them in the darkness and slid like the rain down the corrugated iron roof.

Nor could they forget her in the daytime. When they played tag among the trees she came out to join them. She jerked clumsily, like a marionette on strings. Sometimes she fell down, her arms and legs tangled, and when she got up there were pine needles in her hair and on her cheeks. The children darted among the trees shrieking, twisting from the branches that pricked their faces and showered them with raindrops. The girl followed them when she could, her breath gurgling in her throat and the saliva in a shiny stream down her chin. The children knew that at any moment her mother would dart screaming with rage from the door of the cottage, to scrabble with her fingers in the girl's hair and carry her back whimpering to her cot in the cellar room. Then the crying would take up again, fading and swelling interminably, like the wind in the pines.

There were days when the blue car with the top down carried them off across the hills to places where sky and sea and land merged into one limitless green and blue pattern. The forests were pale green, very still, and at any moment a wild boar might come trotting past, rooting in the ground with his tusks. They saw trees covered with flowers as yellow as daffodils, and others

covered with scarlet flowers. The sea was as warm as the forest air and the tumbling breakers on the long bare beaches were gritty with sand. In the shallow pools the children found shells the color of mahogany and small fringed squid, like flowers. Eels lurked in the niches of the rocks.

But the nights came in between these bright days, and at night the eels swelled in the corners of the room like balloons and bared their teeth at the children. The girl cried for the soldier and the lost turtles and the swing with its long ropes that was no longer theirs.

One day the children saddled the slow, safe horses: Cherry and Minnie with the gray-white coat, and King who held his head up highest. The day was dull and breathless as they turned down the sandy road that led away through cactus and lantana to a beach they had not been to yet. They rode without speaking, sitting loosely forward against the stiff pommel and hearing only the plop-plop of the horses' hooves on the sand. The gray-green flat wedges of cactus looked like scarecrows and the dull light snuffed out the tiny gaudy flowers of the lantana bushes. Bathing suit and towel, tied into a bundle behind each saddle, bobbed with the horses' easy movements. The reins lay in slack hands and the afternoon wore on.

They came at last to a fringe of trees that stood between them and the beach: kiawe trees with ugly black thorns and tall gaunt palms. The children dropped from the saddles and looped the reins over the heads of the docile horses. They untied the bathing suits and towels and picked their way cautiously between the kiawe trees to the beach beyond.

It was a wide empty beach with the sea riding up in patient swells. A scattering of birds beat up into the air as the children ran forward tentatively, shedding their clothes without stopping and pulling up the bathing suits over thin haunches. Just then the sun burned through the overcast and turned the water instantly to sparkling blue and green.

The children began to dance over the sand, flinging it up behind them. The beach dipped and hardened near the water; the receding waves sucked pebbles with them, turning, tossing, tumbling them about. The children threw up their arms and fell into the water. The waves swept them up the beach and then back, willy-nilly, like the pebbles, and their white frothing crests burst against the children's faces. The children felt themselves projected into the sunlight and then drawn deep under water where the light quivered and turned green. Their splashings and screechings were lost in the unceasing roar of the waves. They flung themselves about until their mouths were wry with salt, their eyes bloodshot, and their minds found room for this moment only and its delight.

It was not until later that they found the bones, which had been there all along, and for a long time before. Panting after the swim, glowing from top to toe, the children ran out of the waves' reach and threw themselves upon the beach. It was then that the bones thrust up through the sand into the sunlight.

Look, shouted one child, holding up a long bleached bone with knobs at either end. And look, look, look, they called as they ran about giddily, finding just under the surface where the dampness began the bones that were white and hard and all shapes and sizes. But there were more teeth than anything else: still perfectly shaped with the long roots and the whitish squat upper surfaces. The children bubbled into a frenzy of excitement as they ran about here and there aimlessly, digging a bit, kicking the sand up into the air and finding the teeth everywhere, so that their hands spilled over with them and they were countless.

And then they found a skull. It had been turned up by a chance footstep and now it looked at them from smooth hollows where the eyes had been. The children huddled around it curiously. Then they passed it from hand to hand, for the moment silent and breathless while the sea water still dripped from the wet ends of their hair. They touched the jagged sockets

along the jaw. Suddenly they tossed it from them like a ball and it tumbled and turned over a time or two before lying still.

They took up the hunt again, but not so eagerly. They started to pile the bones into heaps, and then before they finished they turned their backs upon them and ran down to the water's edge. Shading their eyes, they tried to see the outrigger canoes bringing in the natives who had fought other natives here on this strip of beach and left their bones behind them. But they saw only the bare sea and the sunset coloring the sky. When they turned they saw that the heaps of bones cast shadows over the sand.

They raced up the beach to the horses, gathering up their clothes as they went, without stopping to change. The horses whinnied and stirred, tossing their heads expectantly. The children leapt into the saddles, slapped the reins and urged the horses on with their small light bodies thrown forward in the saddles. They rode back down the road at a gallop, the cactus and lantana blurred on either side, Minnie in the lead with her white tail streaming. They kept to the road because there was no other, but in their hearts they longed for one which would lead them back, swiftly and unerringly, to the house with the swing.

PREFACE TO DECISION

By DONALD DAVIDSON

FOR better or worse, the sociologist has become chief expert consultant on the Negro problem, at least to that part of the American public which believes that the problem can be solved by legislative means. The reasoning of this public can be briefly stated as follows: the cause of the problem is race prejudice, which is a kind of social disease afflicting white folks, especially in the South; the sociologist is a kind of doctor, who isolates and describes the disease, and then designates remedy and treatment; apply remedy and treatment through Federal legislation, and you have the cure.

The good sociologist may stand aghast at this highly simplified version of his large and serious studies. I think he ought to stand aghast, but I wish it to be understood that, in what I am about to say, I intend no disrespect to sociological study as such, but rather would offer admiration. It would be a pleasure to distinguish between good sociologists and bad ones if the occasion invited that. But here it is the abuse of sociology that raises the question, and there is also the corollary question of whether there is some defect in the method of sociological study that renders it susceptible of abuse, particularly in such a difficult matter as the Negro problem. At any rate the pressure of contemporary issues has dragged the whole question into the public forum. It is certain that hardly any proposals relating to the Negro problem are now made that do not originate, or claim to originate, in sociological interpretations. The sociologists, some quite unwillingly, others with obvious unction and high hope, have inherited the leadership formerly held by William Lloyd Garrison, Wendell Phillips, Charles Sumner, Thad Stevens, and Company.

This is the way sociology goes at the Negro problem. The investigator, seeing a well-dressed white man, named John Smith, reading a newspaper in the white waiting room of a Southern railroad station, and an equally well-dressed Negro (whose name might easily be John Smith, too) reading his newspaper in the colored waiting room of the same railroad station, treats the difference of race and color as a minor detail and classifies each of the John Smiths as a man, American middle-class, in an urban environment. Then he works out the patterns of group behavior, segregation, "caste and class," and the like. His record will make frequent use of such terms as status, taboo, prejudice, rationalization, racial etiquette, which, though intended to constitute an apparatus for objective study, are liable to much misinterpretation by lay readers. He will also draw upon other social sciences: anthropology, economics, psychology—especially the Freudian psychology.

But he will not give much attention to history as a causal force, and therefore it will not matter much to him that the father or grandfather of the Negro John Smith was a slave who may have belonged to the father or grandfather or kin of the white John Smith in the other waiting room. Yet it is odd that a prime cultural fact, like a name, should get left out. The original name of the Negro John Smith's slave ancestor may have been, in African, something like "Crocodile-killer" or "Spear-maker," a valiant and honorable name, but it was utterly lost when he was kidnapped into slavery or was sold to a slave-dealer by his own tribal chief. He was given the first name, and eventually also got the Saxon patronymic, of a white master, and so the name came down to his free descendant. It is a tragic business that the Negro John Smith cannot enjoy contemplating his own name in quite the same way the white man does, since there is hiatus or lurking humiliation where there ought to be a history. Though he himself is not responsible for it, there has been a vital loss. But the white John Smith can think back for many cen-

turies without discomfort, or often with pride, if he cares to. His history is with him wherever he goes. He does not have to bother to remember it consciously all the time, since it permeates the customs and institutions that the John Smiths and their ilk established and still maintain. But he will remember it instantly, from head to toe, if the Negro John Smith walks into the white waiting room and in any way seems to challenge the separate arrangements. At such a moment the historical element becomes the most powerful element in the whole environment of the two men, indeed in their very being. And white John Smith recalls that his grandfather before him, and his father and he afterwards, never at any time agreed to accept the Negro John Smith as a member of white society, save under such limitations as are symbolized by the separate waiting rooms and other much more intricate but carefully ordered customs.

In general, the sociologist does not see the affair in that way. In his account the Negro will seem to have leaped the gap between a very backward and a very advanced stage of civilization; and the white man, with his "taboos" and "prejudices," will appear to be a backward member of society; his traditions, his laws, his historical consciousness will somehow be transformed into absurd caricatures of the reality. The next step will be for somebody to argue—and it may be the sociologist himself—that the two waiting-rooms are uneconomic and ridiculous; that the white John Smith ought to move over and make room for Negro John Smith on that bench; and finally that, if the white man will not move over of his own accord, a law must be passed to make him do so.

In order to study the Negro problem the sociologist must abstract it. That is always the first act of a science. But in omitting the history of the problem or in treating the history negligently—he always does one or the other—the sociologist throws out of consideration the very data which are of primary importance to the members of the society that he is studying. To

the conservative white man such a study will seem horribly distorted and partial. But to all who would like for various reasons to avoid and ignore the lessons of history—the Marxist, who needs to assume discontinuity; the Negro élite and their highly sophisticated leaders; the imperiously sentimental reformer—to all these, the sociological study is a boon from Heaven, which they are much pleased to accept uncritically and to exploit without limit. Even then, the abstraction would not be so dangerous, if the final step were not always to advocate remedial legislation. At that point we realize that the sociologist has become involved in a strange contradiction, the last one, we would think, of which a sociologist would be guilty. For if anybody would be an advocate of Custom or at least of the organic growth of culture through Custom, it ought to be the sociologist. But in dealing with the Negro problem he steps forth as the depreciator of Custom and becomes the advocate of Law—Law intended to thwart and destroy Custom; or he raises up disciples who do this. To see how unabashedly the great contradiction exhibits itself, and with what innocent disregard of consequences, one need only turn to certain recent books.

Take, for example, *Patterns of Negro Segregation*, by Charles S. Johnson,¹ professor of Sociology and Director of the department of Social Sciences at Fisk University. The “patterns” are traced in bounteous detail, with due attention to all kinds of segregation and all variant practices; the “reactions” of the Negroes and the “rationalizations” of the whites are classified. It is a study of very high competence, and it never falters until it reaches the difficult crux of Custom and Law. Then the good sociologist becomes a bad historian and a partisan who will stop at nothing.

In his chapter, “The Evolution of Racial Legislation,” Dr. Johnson says that Law “exercises the vital function of ensuring the stability and uniformity of customary practices approved

¹Harper and Brothers. New York. 160 pages. 1943. \$2.50.

by the dominant society." Later he adds, with reference to the Reconstruction acts: "The attempt politically to force a legal framework of equality upon a customary order incompatible with it met with no success whatever." Nevertheless, even in this chapter, the various laws passed by the Southern states with the purpose of controlling race relations are represented as an attempt to support a tottering and weakened fabric of customary relations against the challenge posed by "freedom, with the implication of equality." The treatment of historical circumstances is sketchy, and an unwary reader, not in possession of the historical context, might suppose that "freedom, with the implication of equality," represented a commendable rise of Custom, somehow miraculously engendered by the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Amendments, and that therefore the South, in devising legal restrictions for the Negro, was setting Law against Custom, rather than the contrary.

The conclusion of the book goes still further. Urbanization and industrialization, we are told, are the forces now "eroding custom," and they have made it necessary for the South to continue its restrictive laws. The argument then proceeds by analogy. Modern democratic theory is called upon to furnish the miraculous element formerly supplied by the Fourteenth Amendment. We are informed that two fundamental principles have shaped American institutions: "free individualistic initiative, and racialism." "Free individualistic initiative" worked very well while we had a moving frontier and abundant natural resources. But in the end the free play of individualism had to be checked, since it was endangering freedom. The government had to step in with "rigid controls and regulations" to restore democracy.

So, likewise, for the principle of "racialism." The book ends with the following passage:

The effects of the unrestrained operation of the principle of racialism are conceivably as dangerous to American so-

ciety as the unrestricted play of free competition in the economic sphere.

Logically, it would be appropriate for government to impose controls and regulations, as mandatory as those imposed on its economic life, to ensure to all its racial minorities not only free but equal participation in the economic and political life of the country. In fact, before the present war is ended, such action may become a political necessity.

Thus the sociologist, after filling three hundred pages with his skeptical inquiry into segregation, abandons all skepticism when he seeks his remedy. He does not engage in historical examination into the results of former applications of legislative remedy. He does not ask whether legislation to end racial discrimination is really analogous to economic legislation, or whether it will work. He does not ask whether the political theory involved is, as he infers, good democratic theory. He is ready to accept, in a field outside his own, a magic which he would rigorously scrutinize if it appeared in his own field.

But this is the pit into which sociology, and, indeed, much of social science, is always falling. With dismal unanimity, the fourteen Negro authors of the symposium, *What the Negro Wants*,² leap into the same gulf. The fourteen are prominent leaders of one branch or another of Negro opinion. Most of them are learned men of proved ability. The editor of the volume, Rayford W. Logan, is professor of history at Howard University. Two of them are practicing sociologists. One, Doxey A. Wilkerson, is a Communist. The others are college presidents, labor leaders, editors, writers. Most of them make passing reference to the historical context of the Negro problem, but, with only one or two doubtful exceptions, they assume the sociological abstraction of the problem from the historical context as legitimate, and then call for the extirpation of Custom by Law.

²University of North Carolina Press. Chapel Hill. 176 pages. 1944. \$3.50.

The most moderate are Leslie Pinckney Hill and Gordon B. Hancock, who enunciate a somewhat vague program of gradualism, tinged with religion. But Dr. Hancock says, in pure sociological terms: "The color question is a social problem and, as such, is not essentially different from any other social problem. . . . It responds to the same processes of adjustment or maladjustment."

The most extreme, if we omit the Communist agitator, is satirical George S. Schuyler, who writes on "The Caucasian Problem." He proposes—not, I think, as part of his satire—that both white and colored people be re-conditioned to think of themselves as the same. "It would probably be necessary," he points out, "to have drastic laws against manifestations of color prejudice and discrimination, just as we have legislated against kidnapping, arson, and murder."

Marxist tendencies appear here and there. Charles H. Wesley speaks of racial discrimination as "fascist racism," and calls for united action by white and black workers. A. Philip Randolph, organizer of the March on Washington Movement and head of the Pullman Porters' Union, views the American Civil War as a "liberal bourgeois democratic, socio-economic, political revolution [which] failed to complete its basic historic mission." Although he excludes Communists from the MOWM and advocates "non-violent" methods of Negro protest, it is clear that the technique of mass demonstration practiced by the MOWM owes much to Marxist procedures. Langston Hughes, raging against Jim Crow laws, finds Hitleristic tendencies in the South and in regular Communist style puts the liberal Mark Ethridge and the standpat Talmadge in the same bed. He proposes to send W. E. B. Du Bois, Paul Robeson, Lillian Smith, and Erskine Caldwell to lecture the Southern people, with a guard of soldiers "to protect them from the fascist-minded among us." Sterling Brown says that certain Southern "intellectuals" (Allen Tate, F. L. Owsley, David Cohn, Mark Ethridge, John Temple

Graves, and others, including myself) "do not talk very differently from Gerald L. K. Smith"—whom he classifies as a "native fascist."

In general, these writers accept the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments as having unquestioned validity and merit. One of them, the historian Logan, advocates enforcement of the second section of the Fourteenth Amendment, which would reduce Southern representation in Congress. When they invoke "democracy," as they all do, it is not the democracy of Jefferson or, for that matter, of Lincoln (whose name and fame curiously enough, receive no particular adoration in their discourses), but the democracy of the New Deal, with its strong leaning toward collectivism, its emphasis on economic rather than political government, its convenient notion that the state is the unique source of its citizens' welfare.

Some would carry the race issue beyond national boundaries and use international politics as an instrument to benefit the Negro within the United States. Others would work through the labor movement. Still others would prefer a straight political attack. But no matter what the route taken, the final instrument would be Federal legislation.

Among the fourteen, there are no important differences as to "what the Negro wants." All want equality—not the legal fiction of equality, but the substantial reality, in the South and everywhere else. They want political equality, economic equality, and, yes, social equality, so far as social equality is obtainable by legal removal of the more obvious discriminations. They would abolish "public segregation" and probably would expect a good deal of private segregation to be abolished too. Some openly advocate repeal of state laws prohibiting racial intermarriage—on the specious ground, accepted in no civilized or savage society, that marriage is an individual, private affair, not affected with the public interest. They approve the Fair Employment Practices Committee. One of them frankly affirms that this device is, as

Southern critics have charged, an attack upon the "social fabric" of the South.

The extent of these demands—for they are in effect demands, and sometimes are couched in the language of an ultimatum—may shock some persons. They ought to shock no one who has watched the recent growth of Negro aspirations. The Negro leaders are taking at face value the diagnosis which sociology provides. They are also following to its logical extreme the interpretation of democracy which holds that state socialism is the modern reincarnation of the democracy of our fathers. It is not surprising, then, that the Negro leaders reserve their bitterest jeers for those Southern liberals whom, a few years ago, they welcomed as friends. Such men as Virginius Dabney, Mark Ethridge, Howard Odum, anxious to be "liberal" but too slothful or sentimental to inspect the full implications of their liberalism, never offered any Negro, after all, more than half a loaf. They are now damned more roundly than if they had offered no loaf at all. Howard Odum, plaintively commenting on this new turn of affairs, said recently, in his *Race and Rumors of Race*: "There was practically a universal and unanimous attack upon all white leaders, North and South. . . . No matter what a southern liberal leader might have done, there were always bases for attack and satire and cynicism, so that . . . many white leaders were in a mood to give up, not knowing what else could be done." The intensity of such attacks, indeed, raises the question whether the Negro leader would deem even the whole loaf enough. He might always complain against the quality of the whole loaf, or aspire to become the dispenser (or withholder) of loaves.

At any rate, the ground of decision, at least for the immediate future, is clear. Whatever steps are taken to solve the Negro problem will be taken within the context described. It will be considered in terms of welfare as sociology defines welfare and of democracy as democracy is represented by the Wagner Labor Act, the Social Security Law, the War Labor Board, the FEPC, and

the judgments of the New Deal Supreme Court. The South must face the consequences of its allegiance to the present Democratic party and of its general lack of thoughtfulness. The Congress will be asked to perpetuate and strengthen the Fair Employment Practices Committee; to abolish the poll tax as a suffrage qualification and probably to pass other laws affecting the white primary and controlling Federal elections; also, simultaneously and contradictorily, to reduce Southern representation, in accordance with the Fourteenth Amendment. Reconversion of war industry to private use will offer opportunity to require equal employment of Negro labor. If a Federal marriage law is offered in Congress, it will naturally cancel state laws against racial intermarriage. Undoubtedly, too, sooner or later, there will be direct legislative attack upon the segregation practiced in Southern states.

All this is being advocated, or will probably be advocated, in disregard of the past failure of Federal legislation to achieve a solution of the Negro problem. Every direct legislative attack upon the problem has shifted it into a new complex of difficulties, so that the problem, instead of being solved, has taken a new form and introduced new perplexities. Meanwhile, whatever incidental gains the Negro race may seem to have made have been offset by the harm done to the nation as a whole through unforeseen applications of the legislative acts. Instead of being, as some maintain, an organic part of the process of democratic evolution, the various attempts to legislate the Negro into equal status may be viewed as a notable disruption of that process. The history of the question shows that, in this matter, it is a practical impossibility to oppose Law to Custom in any part of the United States, and above all in the South, unless the sponsors of the ill-conceived law are able and willing to back it with military force. Even then it may fail. One would think that a sociologist, considering these ugly truths, would place them among his primary data and would end by arguing that the question is

indeed a racial and cultural matter, into which legislation comes at peril. But of course he is romantic. His social survey is his letter to Santa Claus. He expects the politician to be Santa Claus and to bring fulfillment down the chimney. He needs to be reminded that the political Santa Claus has never been able to deliver this particular kind of goods.

The South has a better historical memory of all aspects of the question than other sections, not because of an innately keener historical consciousness, but because it has always had to face the results of its decisions—and of other people's decisions. It might be useful to state what the South remembers.

The South remembers, in the first place, that the condition of the Negro's entry to this country was that he would remain a slave. He did not migrate hither voluntarily, and he would not have been brought here to swell the population of citizens. Unequal status was the condition of entry, and that gave the Negro a unique position among our inhabitants. Slavery would not necessarily have been a stigma in itself, in the long run. Indians were enslaved in early colonial times, but that did not prevent the pioneer, later on, from dealing with the Indian as an equal on many occasions. But in the case of the Negro, slavery afforded a means of control over an element of population that otherwise would have been deemed undesirable.

Even so, despite the South's spirited defense of slavery in antebellum times—a defense made under extreme provocation—I believe the South of the nineteenth century, which had received slavery as an institution inherited from as far back as the days of Queen Elizabeth, would finally have emancipated the Negro slaves of its own accord. Abolitionism began early in the South itself. It ceased to be Southern abolitionism when the argument became political. The Northern abolitionists and their followers were fools to jump the argument over into the political sphere. If it had stayed on a religious basis, I cannot believe that the South would have delayed emancipation any longer than

would have been necessary to agree how to accommodate the free Negro to American institutions or how to return him to Africa. But the argument did not take that course, and eventually there was conflict.

The Negroes were then freed *en masse* by the Thirteenth Amendment. Despite certain curious features attending the ratification of this amendment, the South never demurred or objected. It accepted the Thirteenth Amendment. It was ratified by the first governments set up in the Southern states after Appomattox—the governments later rejected as illegitimate by the Radical Republican Congress.

The South never accepted the Fourteenth Amendment, which gave the Negro citizenship, or the Fifteenth Amendment, which was intended to secure suffrage to the Negro. Those amendments were, it is true, "ratified" by the so-called state governments set up in the South under the Reconstruction. But, to use the terms that circulate with general approval today, those were as truly "puppet governments" as anything established in Europe by the Nazi armies. The white Southern renegades who participated in them, once called scalawags, were the precise equivalent of the Quislings and Vichyites now held in deserved contempt. Observe too—as the South well remembers—that ratification of the Fourteenth Amendment was made a condition of the re-admission to the Union of those states represented by the puppet governments; that, also, the constitutional three-fourths majority needed for the amendment could not be obtained without some Southern ratifications; and that, furthermore, the majority of Southern white voters were disenfranchised, while the Negroes were enfranchised; and that the registration for election of the puppet legislatures was conducted by Federal armies of occupation, commanded, in the several military districts into which the South had been divided, by Generals Sickles, Schofield, Pope, Ord, and Sheridan. In other words, the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments were planted in the Constitution by fraud and force.

I can see no reason why any Southerner should respect them to-day, nor can I see why any white American, or any American Negro, can take pride in them or derive comfort from them.

The South treats the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments, so far as they apply to the Negro, as legislative fictions which it is not bound to observe, and it gives them, at best, only a grudging, technical obedience. For not only were they secured by fraud and force in the first place, but they have later failed to sway Southern views. In contrast, the various state laws which uphold and fortify the bi-racial system throughout the South do represent genuine conviction and receive overwhelming popular support. The current attacks on these laws are extremely misleading, since they are generally represented as malignant devices whose main purpose is to inflict humiliation upon the Negro and to enforce a hopelessly inferior status upon him. The laws are, indeed, exclusive in effect, and unfortunately under present circumstances may often cause humiliation or inconvenience to individuals. But they originate in positive concern for the white race, not in ill will toward the Negro race; and they carry a strongly implied secondary concern for the Negro race. They represent concessions rather than studied attempts at oppression. In a practical and concrete form, they establish the conditions of tolerance—the conditions without which tolerance might become difficult or impossible. The laws, in effect, forbid the Negro to participate as an equal in white society as such, but they acknowledge his right to flourish, so far as he is capable of flourishing, in the more general, bi-racial society of which both white and black are members. The régime is mild on the whole, and even indulgent on occasion, but it becomes harsh to the point of violence when the Negro or any of his advocates challenges the bi-racial *modus vivendi*. But though violence or extreme lack of personal consideration may be manifested when the system is challenged, it is really intended to prevent conflict by diminishing the provocation to conflict. Separate arrangements restrict

the Negro, but they also restrict the white man. Provisions may not always be equal as the law requires, but the inequality is often due to other causes than racial discrimination.

Back of the total system is, of course, a racial decision of long standing. The white South denies the Negro equal participation in white society, not only because it does not consider him entitled to equality, but because it is certain that social mingling would lead gradually to biological mingling, which it is determined to prevent, both for any given contemporary generation and for its posterity. This view is too well-known to need discussion, but comment should be made on many recent assertions that the South in this matter is hypocritical: that it formally prohibits miscegenation but condones or at least indulges in irregular alliances. Those who make this claim—there are sociologists among them—are generalizing broadly on the narrow basis of scattered individual derelictions. Their statements properly belong in Dr. Odum's little book, *Race and Rumors of Race*. The presence of mixed bloods among American Negroes is no proof that the white South as a whole has violated its own principle of non-amalgamation. In the first place, Negroes were not all ebony black when they came from Africa. Later, the Indians, the colonial French and Spanish, and the Federal soldiers contributed to the mixture. There has also been a tendency toward selectivity, favoring the mixed bloods, among Negroes themselves. Since it is virtually impossible to trace Negro heredity over long periods, we cannot rely upon scientific proof of racial composition and must fall back on reasonable speculation and empirical knowledge. The most glaringly obvious fact about the white South is that it has remained white. Laws against racial intermarriage represent a firm Southern intention to enforce the predominant social will upon any wavering members of the white race and as a matter of course upon the Negro race.

Southern laws which exclude the Negro from the ballot fall in a slightly different category from the laws establishing segrega-

tion. To some extent during the Civil War, and then solidly during Reconstruction, the Negro aligned himself with forces actively hostile to the South. This fact alone, combined with the Negro's subsequent allegiance to the Republican party, made it certain that the South would deprive the Negro of the ballot as soon as it could develop a reliable means of doing so. The South had endured gross injury at the Negro's hands, and it sensed his readiness to continue to inflict injury when encouraged to do so. Yet though the breach caused by War and Reconstruction was almost impossible to close, it might ultimately have been closed in part, with respect to the voting privilege, if it had not been for later developments, among them the attempt of New Deal radicals to establish a "united front" of Negro and white "proletarians." Even now, the Negro does vote in some parts of the South. But he will not achieve the ballot as a general thing at any early date. Judging from its experience, the South believes that a voting Negro will vote, not as a citizen, but as a Negro, in which case he will become the obedient instrument of sectional drives against the South. Or else he will lend himself to ordinary corruption and become, as now in certain localities, simply an instrument for stuffing the ballot-box.

Has the Negro fared worse in the South, where the abstract Federal law is nullified but local law re-enforces Custom, or in the North, where the Federal law receives theoretical respect and there are no restrictive local laws? It is a fair question, but I do not have the means to attempt an informed answer. The fourteen authors of *What the Negro Wants* seem to give an answer. Although they have much animus against the South, they also have much complaint against the North. The Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments have not abolished discrimination in the North, it would seem. For there is Harlem, with its counterparts; and there are the hotels, restaurants, and theatres that exclude Negroes; and I suppose that Harvard University does not admit more than a token contingent of Negro students.

But let that be as it may, it is more important to glance at the uncalculated general effect of specific legislation in behalf of the Negro.

By judicial interpretation, the Fourteenth Amendment has been perverted from its supposed original aim and has been turned into an instrument for sheltering corporate "persons." The growth of industrial monopolies in the United States at large and the "colonialization" of Southern resources by the financial-industrial East are direct results of this extension of the Fourteenth Amendment. In giving giant industry and speculative finance a free hand, the Amendment tore up the social and economic foundations of the older American life and substituted an abstract economic life which, as Charles Johnson has properly noted, threatened to extinguish individual independence. As a present corrective, we now have the Leviathan state of the New Deal model, which talks democratic slogans with its mouth but abridges both corporate and individual freedom with every effective step it takes. It moves toward a totalitarian form of government. Meanwhile, the great businesses that are, by the Negroes' own account, unfriendly to Negro employment, the powerful unions that discriminate against Negroes, and the callous, disordered cities that house Negroes badly and stir up race riots, all these are children, or grandchildren, of the Fourteenth Amendment. Whatever "democratic" privilege Negroes may obtain under the modern quasi-democratic state will be, like the continually diminishing privilege of the whites, only a shadowy caricature of the democracy which the Constitution as a whole was intended to secure.

If the Fourteenth Amendment could beget such far-reaching distortions, what of the legislation now in prospect? We cannot predict all the consequences. But a Federal statute or an amendment eliminating the poll tax requirement would certainly open the way to deprive the states of their constitutional control over the qualifications of voters and would tend to undermine the al-

ready weakened fabric of representative government. An anti-lynching law which gave the Federal government power to punish county officers and to levy fines upon county governments would introduce a procedure foreign to our conception of government and might turn out to be a means of general intimidation far more evil than the evil it was intended to quench. And so it would go. To set Law against Custom in the ways now being proposed is to reverse the process by which the English Common Law and the democratic American institutions founded upon it came into being. The advocates of such reversal are enemies of democracy; they are leading us away from the realm of law into the realm of decree and arbitrary regulation. But meanwhile, unless we surrender to an iron despotism, under which the Negro becomes the favorite of the despot, what reason has anybody—and most of all the Negro—to suppose that an unwilling populace will not again contrive means of evading or nullifying laws that cynically ignore the social will of the white majority?

It is a depressing prospect, no less depressing for all white citizens, North or South, than for the Negroes now buoyed up by false hopes. Yet, since all signs point in one direction, it would seem the part of statesmanship to prepare against the extreme contingency and do what can be done to avert it. Since the brunt of any specifically pro-Negro legislation will fall chiefly on the South, the South in particular ought to take thought about the subject. So far, it has been systematically considered only by such groups as have appeared at the Durham Conference and similar meetings, or at the sessions of the Southern Conference for Human Welfare. But these groups are swayed by the delusions that afflict the sociologists. They are ready to set Law against Custom. They do not represent the fundamental position of the South on the Negro problem. On the other hand, those who do claim to represent that position are apparently unable to define it in terms that will command respect. Out of old political habit they repeat such phrases as "white supremacy,"

but they cannot give those phrases a content that will represent the South's position in terms of present issues. They do not know how to talk to sociologists. They readily become targets for the smear artists.

Is there a Southern leadership which would represent, not pressure groups, but majority opinion in the South as a whole? If there is such a leadership, it had better begin to function. Its main concern, one would think, would be with the bi-racial system, as that system now stands, in the context both of history and of current events, for that system undoubtedly marks the approximate limits of the concessions that the South is willing to make on the Negro problem. And that system expresses the principle upon which the South has always insisted, implicitly or directly: that the Negro problem is a separate and special problem, to be dealt with upon a separate and special basis, and that it throws all problems and all questions into confusion when its special nature is concealed or ignored.

If there is no such Southern leadership, then we shall continue to drift, as we have been drifting, and shall confront the clever drives of the reformer with nothing but our old inertia. If we do thus drift, then a heavy responsibility falls upon those Southern "liberals" who are now so pertly and obviously active. They had better cultivate a healthy respect for that inertia, which, though it stands in regrettable contrast to the brilliant activity of the past, is nevertheless formidable, and may turn out to be inarticulateness rather than lack of concern. And the Southern "liberals," as well as others everywhere, ought to ask themselves whether they are about to repeat the characteristic error of American reformers in handling the Negro problem. The old-time abolitionist called for justice to the Negro; he ended by perpetrating large-scale injustice upon the white man, and with it a bloody ruin from which we have not yet recovered. Perhaps he did not intend it that way. That does not excuse the vice of partial thinking which drove him into paths of cruelty and abuse. The mod-

ern liberal, walled up in sociological abstractions, is about to adopt the same vice. He will incur a like guilt if he continues on his present course.

To say what other approach can be taken to the Negro problem would require another discourse, as long as this one, which would go far beyond the issues reviewed here. This much, however, can be said. Even as a slave, the Negro won personal esteem, often great esteem, from the white man who ruled him. Today, despite the embarrassing inheritance of hostility engendered by events of the past and the endless stream of reproach that continues to be poured upon the South, the Negro still wins personal regard. How does it happen? It happens because the people of the South have always been face to face with the Negro as a person, and because in that situation his individual and personal character is known directly and appreciated concretely, according to his deserts. Because this is true, there are thousands of unknown Negroes today who are doing their race infinitely more good than the educated Negro leaders can ever hope to accomplish through argumentative books. That is the most hopeful aspect of the Negro problem. One would think a sociologist could make something of it, but he seldom does. It is what makes the bi-racial system of the South by far the most decent solution, or approximate solution, of the Negro problem under present conditions. But if the tendencies I have discussed in this article continue, even that hopeful aspect will vanish.

VISION AND PRAYER

By DYLAN THOMAS

I

Who
Are you
Who is born
In the next room
So loud to my own
That I can hear the womb
Opening and the dark run
Over the ghost and the dropped son
Behind the wall thin as a wren's bone?
In the birth bloody room unknown
To the burn and turn of time
And the heart print of man
Bows no baptism
But dark alone
Blessing on
The wild
Child.

I

Must lie
Still as stone
By the wren bone
Wall hearing the moan
Of the mother hidden
And the shadowed head of pain
Casting tomorrow like a thorn
And the midwives of miracle sing
Until the turbulent new born
Burns me his name and his flame
And the winged wall is torn
By his torrid crown
And the dark thrown
From his loin
To bright
Light.

When
The wren
Bonewrithes down
And the first dawn
Furied by his stream
Swarms on the kingdom come
Of the dazzler of heaven
And the splashed mothering maiden
Who bore him with a bonfire in
His mouth and rocked him like a storm
I shall run lost in sudden
Terror and shining from
The once hooded room
Crying in vain
In the caldron
Of his
Kiss

I n
The spin
Of the sun
In the spuming
Cyclone of his wing
For I was lost who am
Crying at the man-drenched throne
In the first fury of his stream
And the lightnings of adoration
Back to black silence melt and mourn
For I was lost who have come
To dumbfounding haven
And the finding one
And the high noon
Of his wound
Blinds my
Cry.

There
 Crouched bare
 In the shrine
 Of his blazing
 Breast I shall waken
 To the judge blown bedlam
 Of the uncaged sea bottom
 The cloud climb of the exhaling tomb
 And the bidden dust upsailing
 With his flame in every grain.
 O spiral of ascension
 From the vultured urn
 Of the morning
 Of man when
 The land
 And

The
Born sea
Praised the sun
The finding one
And upright Adam
Sang upon origin!
O the wings of the children!
The woundward flight of the ancient
Young from the canyons of oblivion!
The sky stride of the always slain
In battle! the happening
Of saints to their vision!
The worldwinding home!
And the whole pain
Flows open
And I
Die.

II

In the name of the lost who glory in
 The swinish plains of carrion
 Under the burial song
 Of the birds of burden
 Heavy with the drowned
 And the green dust
 And bearing
 The ghost
 From
 The ground
 Like pollen
 On the black plume
 And the beak of slime
 I pray though I belong
 Not wholly to that lamenting
 Brethren for joy has moved within
 The inmost marrow of my heart bone

That he who learns now the sun and moon
Of his mother's milk may return
Before the lips blaze and bloom
To the birth bloody room
Behind the wall's wren
Bone and be dumb
And the womb
That bore
For
All men
The adored
Infant light or
The dazzling prison
Yawn to his upcoming.
In the name of the wanton
Lost on the unchristened mountain
In the centre of dark I pray him

That he let the dead lie though they moan
 For his briared hands to hoist them
 To the shrine of his world's wound
 And the blood drop's garden
 Endure the stone
 Blind host to sleep
 In the dark
 And deep
 Rock
 A w a k e
 No heart bone
 But let it break
 On the mountain crown
 Unsummoned by the sun
 And the beating dust be blown
 Down to the river rooting plain
 Under the night forever falling.

Forever falling night is a known
Star and country to the legion
Of sleepers whose tongue I toll
To mourn his deluging
Light through sea and soil
And we have come
To know all
Places
Ways
Mazes
Passages
Quarters and graves
Of the endless fall.
Now common lazarus
Of the charting sleepers prays
Never to awake and arise
For the country of death is the heart's size

And the star of the lost the shape of the eyes.
 In the name of the fatherless
 In the name of the unborn
 And the undesirers
 Of midwiving morning's
 Hands or instruments
 O in the name
 Of no one
 Now or
 No
 One to
 Be I pray
 May the crimson
 Sun spin a grave grey
 And the colour of clay
 Stream upon his martyrdom
 In the interpreted evening
 And the known dark of the earth amen.

I turn the corner of prayer and burn
In a blessing of the sudden
Sun. In the name of the damned
I would turn back and run
To the hidden land
But the loud sun
Christens down
The sky.
I
Am found.
O let him
Scald me and drown
Me in his world's wound.
His lightning answers my
Cry. My voice burns in his hand.
Now I am lost in the blinding
One. The sun roars at the prayer's end.

FIVE POEMS

By RANDALL JARRELL

THE SNOW-LEOPARD

His pads furring the scarp's rime,
Weightless in greys and ecru, gliding
Invisibly, incuriously
As the crystals of the cirri wandering
A mile below his absent eyes,
The leopard gazes at the caravan.
The yaks groaning with tea, the burlaps
Lapping and lapping each stunned universe
That gasps like a kettle for its thinning life
Are pools in the interminable abyss
That ranges up through ice, through air, to night.
Raiders of the unminding element,
The last cold capillaries of their kind,
They move so slowly they are motionless
To any eye less stubborn than a man's. . . .
From the implacable jumble of the blocks
The grains dance icily, a scouring plume,
Into the breath, sustaining, unsustainable,
They trade to that last stillness for their death.
They sense with misunderstanding horror, with desire
Behind the world their blood sets up in mist
The brute and geometrical necessity:
The leopard waving with a grating purr
His six-foot tail: the leopard, who looks sleepily—
Cold, fugitive, secure—at all he knows,
At all that he is: the heart of heartlessness.

TO THE NEW WORLD

The leaves are struck and dance, the bird is blown
Along the summer's burned and homeward breast;
Berg and blind sea, the scrawled and lapping foam,
The coal and portraits of the galleries
Are lost in the hills of firs: the bird flaps west.

Through the wet green I hear the axes' iron,
I see the spindles coupling in the glade—
The tied face pitiless above the native flame.
The stone of ages scales from my ruined eyes;
The rifles ring like clocks from their stockade.

The new eyes are dry as coins; the corn is gold
To the gold eyes, and all its arms are iron;
These tendons thresh a continent like steam.
Trapped, sawn, or failing westward with a sigh,
The atoms tremble from their bankrupt dream.

On stones and sand a government reserves
For some few, halting and bewildered braves,
Their grannies spinning out an age on mush
And bony children with a threadbare ball,
The peoples find asylum for the life

(Dull haunter of the unattaching eyes)
That veined, from ice to ice, a hemisphere.
What bloods bought my redemption! what lives cleansed
The iron hands, the pure demanding eyes
I turned back to the evil of my birth!

Yet surely I bought an Eden with that blood,
The peoples died to feed a final Life,
The world's heart beating in its wilderness. . . .
Who dreamed that it might burst, the bird stoop home,
The leaves plunge eastward to outranging death?

THE STATE

When they killed my mother it made me nervous:

I thought to myself, It was *right*:

Of course she was crazy, and how she ate!

And she died, after all, in her way, for the State.

But I minded: how queer it was to stare

At one of them not sitting there.

When they drafted Sister I said all night,

"It's healthier there in the fields";

And I'd think, "Now I'm helping to win the War,"

When the neighbors came in, as they did, with my meals.

And I was, I was; but I was scared

With only one of them sitting there.

When they took my cat for the Army Corps

Of Conservation and Supply,

I thought of him there in the cold with the mice

And I cried, and I cried, and I wanted to die.

They were there, and I saw them, and that is my life.

Now there's nothing. I'm dead, and I want to die.

THE STREET HAS CHANGED

I

In the city that ruled me
The heads turn to another head.
I am forgotten like a year.
Was I good? was I happy?
Who is there to care?
I was a dream, a dream, the dream of the dead.

II

Had you sucked no more sense than I
From that undifferentiating misery
The new beast draws home
Old to his old blood: to blood brackish, not with tears
But with the salt of that first hopeful sea
That saw commence as one and new
The old and separate you and me?

III

What were you? It is too late to learn
And it does not matter. I thought you
Mine, that was not true, I thought you
All that I had, all that I could ever
Wish to have or have, and that was true.
And that does not matter either. What were you?
What does it matter? I love you
And who knows now, who would care if he knew?

NEWS

Children, come to my knee.
I am old, I forget
More things than I can say.
What is the news today?
No news today, no news today.

There is always news—a town
Burning, a man shot down.
Men salt the lands with man;
The blood rusts a man's hand.
That is no news today.

No news, no news. . . .
But were I to say
I have seen mercy: the sun lapping
The bared head, the empty hand—
Why, who would believe you today?

FOUR POEMS

BY JOSEPHINE MILES

OPAL

The steamfitter had no notion of buying an opal,
But a stone comes sudden in its meaning often.

He looked for a new watch, that part of his life, there was none,
He had to furnish his own time sense.

But this opal. Fire of time that burned in the antique reaches,
Roman omen, power of the sooth.

How comes so much actual straight evil into an opal?
Fix on a streak of bad luck, it goes out.

How comes so much red, then green, into an opal?
There aren't those colors in a glass of milk.

His wife didn't want the jewel but he bought it
And took that burden on, which fate forbore.

BLOOM

The steamfitter comes home in a pink cloud plainly
Keeps his helmet clapped on his head vainly,
It's a new day, season, and 7 A.M. only.

The quinces ripen in their most lurid blossoms,
They thicken on every side the streetcar pathways,
The dogtired steamfitter gets home between them.

One plush of quince at his own door he will doff to,
Take in the dawn his hard steel helmet off to,
But bush will not bend or petal blow, it's so early.

FORWARD

Impervious to its pledge the human heart
Looks not to forward or to rear but sinks
Into an instant and there drifts entire.
How forward are the suns that rise again.

The pledge now called, the sources now are spent,
The scene impoverished and the heart secure,
What's time that lets not well enough alone?
How forward are the suns that rise again.

Perfection can insist percent's complete,
The round and perfect heart retire from love.
How forward are the suns that rise again.

FLAG LEVEL

World at flag level rides ambitious ride,
The seagull air there flaps from side to side
And the terrific brink is countrified.

That's why so much dreamed up at flag level
Comes to completion in the yards lower,
In a paved world busier and slower.

And that's the reason in the highest offices
The officers dispose, bestow, at ease,
And the feet of the office girls float in the breeze.

SPATIAL FORM IN MODERN LITERATURE

AN ESSAY IN THREE PARTS*

By JOSEPH FRANK

Part II

3

THE name of Djuna Barnes is not unknown to those readers who followed, with any care, the stream of pamphlets, books, magazines and anthologies that poured forth to enlighten America in the feverish days of literary expatriation. Miss Barnes, it is true, must always have remained a somewhat enigmatic figure even to the most attentive reader. Born in New York State, she spent most of her time abroad in England and France; and the glimpses one catches of her in the memoirs of the period are brief and unrevealing. She appears in *THE DIAL* from time to time with a drawing or a poem; she crops up now and again in some anthology of advance-guard writers—the usual agglomeration of people who are later to become famous, or to sink into the melancholy oblivion of frustrated promise. Before the publication of *Nightwood*, indeed, one might have been inclined to place her name in the latter group. For, while she has a book of short stories and an earlier novel to her credit, neither of them prepares one for the maturity of achievement so conspicuous in every line of her latest work.

Of the fantastical quality of her imagination, of the gift for imagery which, as T. S. Eliot has said, gives one a sense of horror and doom akin to Elizabethan tragedy; of the epigrammatic incisiveness of her phrasing and her penchant, also akin to the

*Part I appeared in the April, 1945, issue of *THE SEWANEE REVIEW*. It was originally planned to publish this essay in two parts; considerations of space have compelled us to publish it in three.—Editor.

Elizabethans, for dealing with the more scabrous manifestations of human fallibility—of all these there is evidence in *Ryder*, Miss Barnes's first novel. But all this might well have resulted only in a momentary flare-up of capricious brilliance, whose radiance would have been as dazzling as it was insubstantial. *Ryder*, it must be confessed, is an anomalous creation from any point of view. Although Miss Barnes's unusual qualities gradually emerge from its kaleidoscope of moods and styles, these qualities are still, so to speak, held in solution, or at best placed in the service of a literary *jeu d'esprit*. Only in *Nightwood* do they finally crystallize into a definitive and comprehensible pattern.

Many critics—not least among them T. S. Eliot himself—have paid tribute to *Nightwood's* compelling intensity, its head-and-shoulders superiority, simply as a stylistic phenomenon, to most of the works that currently pass for literature. But *Nightwood's* reputation at present is similar, in many respects, to that of *The Waste Land* in 1922—it is known as a collection of striking passages, some of breathtaking poetic quality, appealing chiefly to connoisseurs of somewhat gamey literary items. Such a reputation, it need hardly be remarked, is not conducive to intelligent appreciation or understanding. Thanks to critics like F. R. Leavis, Cleanth Brooks, and F. O. Matthiessen, we are now able to approach *The Waste Land* as a work of art, rather than as a battleground for opposing poetic theories or as a curious piece of literary esoterica; and it is time that such a process should be at least begun for *Nightwood*.

Before dealing with *Nightwood* in detail, however, we must make certain broad distinctions between it and the novels already considered. While the structural principle of *Nightwood* is the same as in *Ulysses* and *À la recherche du temps perdu*—spatial form, obtained by means of reflexive reference—there are marked differences in technique that will be obvious to every reader. Taking an analogy from another art, we can say that these differences are similar to the differences between the work of Cé-

zanne and the compositions of a later abstract painter like Braque. What characterizes the work of Cézanne, above all, is the tension between two conflicting but deeply-rooted tendencies: on the one hand, a struggle to attain esthetic form—conceived of by Cézanne as a self-enclosed unity of form-and-color harmonies—and, on the other hand, the desire to create this form through the recognizable depiction of natural objects. Later artists, abandoning Cézanne's efforts to achieve form in terms of natural objects, took over only his preoccupation with formal harmonies, omitting natural objects altogether or presenting them in some distorted manner.

Like Cézanne, Proust and Joyce accept the naturalistic principle, presenting their characters in terms of those commonplace details, those descriptions of circumstance and environment, that we have come to regard as verisimilar. At the same time, we have seen, they intended to control the ebullience of their naturalistic detail by the unity of spatial apprehension. But in *Nightwood*, as in the work of Braque and the later abstract painters, the naturalistic principle is totally abandoned: no attempt is made to convince us that the characters are actual flesh-and-blood human beings. We are asked only to accept their world as we accept an abstract painting or, to return to literature, as we accept a Shakespearian play—as an autonomous pattern giving us an individual vision of reality, rather than what we might consider its exact reflection.

To illustrate the transition that takes place in *Nightwood* let us examine an interesting passage from Proust, where the process can be caught at a rudimentary level. In describing Robert de Saint-Loup, an important character in the early sections of the novel, the narrator tells us that he could see concealed "beneath a courtier's smile his warrior's thirst for action—when I examined him I could see how closely the vigorous structure of his triangular face must have been modelled on that of his ancestors' faces, a face devised rather for an ardent bowman than for a

delicate student. Beneath his fine skin the bold construction, the feudal architecture were apparent. His head made one think of those old dungeon keeps on which the disused battlements are still to be seen, although inside they have been converted into libraries." When the reader comes across this passage, he has already learned a considerable number of facts about Saint-Loup. He is, for one thing, a member of the Guermantes family, one of the oldest and most aristocratic in the French nobility and still the acknowledged leaders of Parisian society. Unlike their feudal ancestors, however, the Guermantes have no real influence over the internal affairs of France under the Third Republic. Saint-Loup, for another thing, is by way of being a family black sheep: seemingly uninterested in social success, a devoted student of Nietzsche and Proudhon, we are told that his head was full of "socialistic spoutings," and that he was "imbued with the most profound contempt for his caste." Knowing these facts from earlier sections of the novel, the reader accepts the passage quoted above simply as a trenchant summation of Saint-Loup's character. But so precisely do the images in this passage apply to everything the reader has learned about Saint-Loup, so exactly do they communicate the central impression of his personality, that it would be possible to derive a total knowledge of his character solely from the images without attaching them to a set of external social and historical details.

Images of this kind are commoner in poetry than in prose—more particularly, since we are speaking of character description, in dramatic poetry. In Shakespeare and the Elizabethans, descriptions of character are not "realistic" as we understand the word today: they are not a collection of circumstantial details whose bare conglomeration is assumed to form a definition. The dramatic poet, rather, defined both the physical and psychological aspects of character at one stroke, in an image or series of images. Here is Antony, for example, as Shakespeare presents him in the opening scene of *Antony and Cleopatra*:

Nay, but this dotage of our general's
O'erflows the measure: those his goodly eyes
That o'er the files and musters of the war
Have glow'd like plated Mars, now bend, now turn,
The office and devotion of their view
Upon a tawny front: his captain's heart,
Which in the scuffles of great fights hath burst
The buckles on his breast, reneges all temper,
And is become the bellows and the fan
To cool a gipsy's lust.

And then, to complete the picture, Antony is contemptuously called "the triple pillar of the world transformed into a strumpet's fool." Or, to take a more modern example, from a poet strongly influenced by the Elizabethans, here is the twentieth-century everyman:

He, the young man carbuncular, arrives,
A small house agent's clerk, with one bold stare,
One of the low on whom assurance sits
As a silk hat on a Bradford millionaire.

As Ramon Fernandez has remarked of similar character descriptions in the work of George Meredith, images of this kind analyze without dissociating; they describe character but, at the same time, hold fast to the unity of personality, without splintering it to fragments in trying to seize the secret of its integration.

Writing of this order, charged with symbolic overtones, piercing through the cumbrous mass of naturalistic detail to express the essence of character in an image, is the antithesis to what we are accustomed in the novel. Ordinary novels, as T. S. Eliot justly observes in his preface to *Nightwood*, "obtain what reality they have largely from an accurate rendering of the noises that human beings currently make in their daily simple needs of communication; and what part of a novel is not composed of these noises consists of a prose which is no more alive than that

of a competent newspaper writer or government official." Miss Barnes abandons any pretensions to this kind of verisimilitude, just as modern artists have abandoned any attempt at naturalistic representation; and the result is a world as strange to the reader, at first sight, as the world of abstract art was to its first spectators. Since the selection of detail in *Nightwood* is governed, not by the logic of verisimilitude, but by the demands of the *décor* necessary to enhance the symbolic significance of the characters, the novel has baffled even its most fascinated admirers. Perhaps we can clear up some of the mystery by applying our method of reflexive reference, instead of approaching the book, as most of its readers have done, expecting to find a coherent temporal pattern of narrative.

Since *Nightwood* lacks a narrative structure in the ordinary sense, it cannot be reduced to any sequence of action for purposes of explanation. One can, if one chooses, follow the narrator in Proust through the various stages of his social career; one can, with some difficulty, follow Leopold Bloom's epic journey through Dublin; but no such reduction is possible in *Nightwood*. As Dr. O'Connor remarks to Nora Flood, with his desperate gaiety, "I have a narrative, but you will be put to it to find it." Strictly speaking, the doctor is wrong—he has a static situation, not a narrative, and no matter how hard the reader looks he will find only the various facets of this situation explored from different angles. The eight chapters of *Nightwood* are like searchlights, probing the darkness each from a different direction, yet ultimately focusing on and illuminating the same entanglement of the human spirit. In the first four chapters we are introduced to each of the important persons—Felix Volkbein, Nora Flood, Robin Vote, Jenny Petherbridge, and Dr. O'Connor. The next three chapters are, for the most part, long monologues by the doctor, through which the developments of the earlier chapters begin to take on meaning. The last chapter, only a few pages long, has the effect of a coda, giving us what we have already

come to feel is the only possible termination. And these chapters are knit together, not by the progress of any action—either physical action, or, as in a stream-of-consciousness novel, the act of thinking—but by the continual reference and cross-reference of images and symbols which must be referred to each other spatially throughout the time-act of reading.

Although, at first reading, Dr. O'Connor's brilliant and fantastic monologues seem to dominate the book, overshadowing the other characters, closer reading will show that the central figure—the figure around which the situation revolves—is Robin Vote. This creation—it is impossible to call her a character, since character implies humanity and she has not yet attained the level of the human—is one of the most remarkable figures in contemporary literature. We meet her first when the doctor, sitting and drinking with Felix Volkbein in a Paris bar, is summoned by a bellboy from a near-by hotel to look after a lady who has fainted and cannot be awakened. "The perfume that her body exhaled," Miss Barnes writes of Robin,

... was of the quality of that earth-flesh, fungi, which smells of captured dampness and yet is so dry, overcast with the odor of oil of amber, which is an inner malady of the sea, making her seem as if she had invaded a sleep incautious and entire. Her flesh was the texture of plant life, and beneath it one sensed a frame, broad, porous and sleep-worn, as if sleep were a decay fishing her beneath the visible surface. About her head there was an effulgence as of phosphorous glowing about the circumference of a body of water—as if her life lay through her in ungainly luminous deteriorations—the troubling structure of the born somnambule, who lives in two worlds—meet of child and desperado.

Taken by itself, this description is likely to prove more confusing than enlightening; but a few pages later another attempt is made to explain Robin's significance.

Sometimes one meets a woman who is beast turning human. Such a person's every movement will reduce to an image of a forgotten experience; a mirage of an eternal wedding cast on the racial memory; as insupportable a joy as would be the vision of an eland coming down an aisle of trees, chapleted with orange blossoms and bridal veil, a hoof raised in the economy of fear, stepping in the trepidation of flesh that will become a myth.

It is significant that we first meet Robin—*la somnambule*, the sleepwalker—when she is being awakened; before that moment we have no knowledge of her life. Her life might be said to begin with that moment, and the act of awakening to be, symbolically, the act of birth.

From these descriptions, we begin to realize that Robin symbolizes a state of existence which is before, rather than beyond, good and evil. She is both innocent and depraved—meet of child and desperado—precisely because she has not reached the human state, where moral values become relevant. Lacking responsibility of any kind, abandoning herself to wayward and perverse passions, she yet has the innocence and purity of a child. (Nora tells the doctor in the seventh chapter that Robin played “with her toys, trains, and animals and cars to wind up, and dolls and marbles and toy soldiers.”) Gliding through life like a sleepwalker, living in a dream from which she has not awakened—awakening would imply a consciousness of moral value—Robin is at once completely egotistical and yet lacking in a sense of her own identity. “And why does Robin feel innocent?” Dr. O'Connor asks, when Nora, Robin's lover, comes to him with her agonizing questions. “Every bed she leaves, without caring, fills her heart with peace and happiness. . . . She knows she is innocent because she can't do anything in relation to anyone but herself.” But at the same time the doctor tells Felix, Robin's erstwhile husband, that Robin had written from America saying, “Remember me.” “Probably,” he remarks, “because she has difficulty

in remembering herself." By taking these passages together, we can understand what the doctor means when he says that "Robin was outside the 'human type'—a wild thing caught in a woman's skin, monstrously alone, monstrously vain."

The situation of the novel, as we have already said, revolves around this extraordinary creature. Robin, Felix eagerly confides to the doctor, "always seemed to be looking for someone to tell her that she was innocent. . . . There are some people who must get permission to live, and if the Baronin [Robin] finds no one to give her that permission, she will make an innocence for herself; a fearful sort of primitive innocence." To be conscious of one's innocence, of course, implies a consciousness of moral value which, we have seen, Robin does not possess. If Robin could find someone to tell her she was innocent, that would mean she had found someone who had raised her to the level of the human—someone who had given her "permission to live" as a human being, not merely to exist as an amorphous lump of moral possibility. This situation is the nub of the novel—Robin's relation to the other characters centers around the question: Will any of them be able to give her a sense of identity—to raise her to the level of the human?

Once this fundamental problem is grasped, much of what we read in the rest of *Nightwood* becomes considerably clearer. At the beginning of the book we are introduced to Felix Volkbein, a Viennese half-Jew with a somewhat questionable title. What Miss Barnes says of Felix immediately elevates him to the same type of symbolic stature that Robin possesses.

What had formed Felix from the date of his birth to his coming to thirty was unknown to the world, for the step of the wandering Jew is in every son. No matter where and when you meet him you feel that he has come from . . . some secret land that he has been nourished on but cannot inherit, for the Jew seems to be everywhere from nowhere.

When Felix's name was mentioned, three or more persons would swear to having seen him the week before in three different countries simultaneously.

Combined with this aspect of Felix, we find attributed to him a curious "obsession for what he termed 'Old Europe': aristocracy, nobility, royalty. . . . He felt that the great past might mend a little if he bowed low enough, if he succumbed and gave homage." Immediately after seeing Robin, Felix confesses to the doctor that he "wished a son who would feel as he felt about the 'great past.' " "To pay homage to our past," he says, "is the only gesture that also includes the future." He pays court to Robin and, since her "life held no volition for refusal," they marry. Felix, then, makes the first effort to shape Robin, to give her permission to live by informing her with his own sense of moral values. He does so precisely because he senses, almost instinctively, that with Robin "anything can be done."

Felix fails with Robin, just as do the others who try to provide her with a moral framework. But what exactly does Felix's failure imply? What, in other words, is the sense of values which proves inadequate to lift Robin to the level of the human? Because Felix is so astonishingly individual a creation, despite the broader significance of his rôle in the novel, this is a particularly difficult question to answer. Some clue may be found if we remind ourselves of another Wandering Jew in modern fiction, Leopold Bloom. Seeking for a character to typify *l'homme moyen sensuel*, not only of our own time but through all history, Joyce chose the figure of a Wandering Jew, vainly trying to integrate himself with a culture to which he is essentially alien. The predicament of the Jew, in a certain sense, is merely a magnification of the predicament of modern man himself, bewildered and homeless in a mechanical wilderness of his own creation. If we view Felix in this light, understanding his dubious title, his abject reverence for the great tradition of the past, his frantic desire to assimilate this tradition to himself as so many examples

of a basic need to feel at home in some cultural framework, we can begin to understand the deeper implications of his character.

Until his meeting with Robin, Felix's relationship to what he considered the great traditions of the European past had been completely negative. The first chapter of the novel, dominated by Felix, is appropriately entitled "Bow Down"—for this phrase defines Felix's attitude towards the great tradition, even towards its trivial and unworthy modern representatives. "In restaurants he bowed slightly to anyone who looked as if he might be 'someone,' making the bow so imperceptible that the surprised person might think he was merely adjusting his stomach." The doctor, by linking this blind, unthinking worship of the aristocratic traditions of the past with the attitude of the masses in general towards an aristocracy they have falsely deified, lights up in a flash the symbolic meaning of Felix's obsession. "Nobility, very well, but what is it?" The Baron started to answer him, but the doctor held up his hand. "Wait a minute! I know—the few that the many have lied about well and long enough to make them deathless." Felix, then, is in the position of the masses, the common men, desperately lying to themselves about an inherited sense of values of which they know only the external trappings. But by marrying Robin, the doctor realizes, Felix is staking his existence on the belief that these traditional values still have vitality—that they can and will shape the primeval chaos of Robin into order. (On Felix's first visit to court Robin, he carries two volumes on the life of the Bourbons.) Knowing that Felix's attempt is doomed to failure, the doctor makes an effort to warn him: "The last muscle of aristocracy is madness—remember that"—the doctor leaned forward—"the last child born to aristocracy is sometimes an idiot. . . ." And, a few paragraphs later, the doctor reiterates, "So I say beware! In the king's bed is always found, just before it becomes a museum piece, the droppings of the black sheep."

Robin does bear Felix a child, sickly, stunted, prematurely aged, possibly feeble-minded—the droppings of the black sheep. And, after unwillingly conceiving the child “amid loud and frantic cries of affirmation and despair,” Robin leaves Felix when he discovers she did not want it. “You didn’t want him,” he said. . . . “It seems I could not accomplish that.” Since, for Felix, the child had meant the creative re-affirmation of the great European aristocratic tradition, Felix’s confession of defeat with Robin represents, at the same time, his final realization that this tradition is impotent. It contains nothing for the future except the wistful and precocious senility of Guido, Felix’s child. This is the explanation of the enigmatic scene at the end of the sixth chapter, where Felix, after dropping out of sight, makes his last appearance. On entering a Viennese café, Felix saw instantly “a tall man in the corner who, he was sure, was the Grand Duke Alexander of Russia, cousin and brother-in-law of the late Czar Nicholas.” At first, Felix refuses to look at the man, but later “with the abandon of what a madman knows to be his one hope of escape, disproof of his own madness,” as he is leaving the café “he turned and made a slight bow, his head in his confusion making a complete half-swing, as an animal will turn its head away from a human, as if in mortal shame.” Here we have the consequence of Felix’s failure with Robin: for if Felix had succeeded in asserting his values positively, in shaping Robin, there would no longer have been any need for him to “bow down”—he would have created a living incarnation of these values, Guido, the combination of Robin’s primitive vitality and his own sense of the past, who would have had far more right to represent these values than their merely passive inheritors. But since Felix failed, as the doctor foresaw—though Felix fights against the recognition of failure, for Guido’s sake—he is compelled, finally, to bow down once more in defeated submission.

The next character to enter the lists with Robin is Nora Flood, who comes perhaps closest of all to giving Robin “permission to

live." Nora, as a symbolic figure, is given meaning on a number of levels; but the title of the third chapter, "Night Watch," expresses the essence of her spiritual attitude. We are told that she keeps "a 'paupers' salon for poets, radicals, beggars, artists, and people in love; for Catholics, Protestants, Brahmins, dabblers in black magic and medicine"—this last, of course, being an allusion to the doctor. Nora was "by temperament an early Christian; she believed the word." As Miss Barnes explains, this meant that she "robbed herself for everyone. . . . Wandering people the world over found her profitable in that she could be sold for a price forever, for she carried her betrayal money in her own pocket." It is significant that Nora is described in images of the American West: "Looking at her, foreigners remembered stories they had heard of covered wagons; animals going down to drink; children's heads, just as far as the eyes, looking in fright out of small windows, where in the dark another race crouched in ambush." The connection between these images, Nora's "paupers" salon and her early Christian temperament is this: they represent different crystallizations of the same spiritual attitude. Among the determinants of this attitude are a belief in the innate goodness of man, or at least in his capacity for moral improvement, a belief in progress, an indiscriminate approbation for all forms of ethical and intellectual unconventionality—in short, the complete antithesis to the world of values represented by Felix. Irving Babbitt would have called Nora a hopeless Rousseauist; and he would have been right.

Characteristically, while Felix was drawn to Robin because he could use her, Nora is drawn to her through pity. The scene in which Nora meets Robin is important not only for what it reveals of their relationship, but also because there is a passage that confirms our interpretation of Robin. Both Robin and Nora are watching a circus performance when,

. . . as one powerful lioness came to the turn of the bars, exactly opposite the girl [Robin], she turned her furious

great head with its yellow eyes afire and went down, her paws thrust through the bars and, as she regarded the girl, as if a river were falling behind impassable heat, her eyes flowed in tears that never reached the surface.

Being neither animal nor human, Robin evokes pity from both species. Nora, intuitively understanding Robin's perturbation at the lioness's stare, takes her by the hand and leads her outside. And, although strangers until that moment, Robin is soon telling Nora "her wish for a home, as if she were afraid she would be lost again, as if she were aware, without conscious knowledge, that she belonged to Nora, and that if Nora did not make it permanent by her own strength, she would forget." What Robin would forget was where she belonged, her own identity, given to her at least for a while by the strength of Nora's love and pity.

Nora's failure with Robin is already foreshadowed in Miss Barnes's first description of Nora: she "had the face of all people who love the people—a face that would be evil when she found out that to love without criticism is to be betrayed." While Felix had deliberately tried to shape Robin, Nora simply envelops her in an all-embracing love which, because of Nora's belief in natural goodness, has no room for praise or blame. "In court," Miss Barnes remarks, Nora "would have been impossible; no one would have been hanged, reproached or forgiven because no one would have been 'accused.'" With a creature like Robin, the result was inevitable—Nora's self-sacrificing devotion does succeed for a time in giving Robin a sense of identity; Robin's unconditional acceptance by Nora, exactly as she is, eases the tension between the animal and the human that is tearing Robin's life apart; but Nora, in the end, is not able to give Robin "permission to live" any more than Felix could. Most of the third chapter of the novel is given over to an analysis of the slow estrangement between Robin and Nora, an estrangement all the more torturous because, while desired by neither, it is recognized as inevitable by both.

Yet the quality of Robin's relation with Nora shows how much more closely Nora came to success than Felix. With Felix, Robin had been passive, almost disinterested, in conformity with her somnambulistic nature. Although her life was a frenzy of activity, she never really acted in more than an animal sense—human action implies thought and decision, while Robin's acts were always re-actions to obscure impulses whose meaning she did not understand. With Nora, however, there are moments when Robin realizes the terror of their inevitable separation; and in these moments, clinging to Nora like a child, Robin becomes almost human because her terror reveals an implicit moral choice.

Yet sometimes, going about the house, in passing each other, they would fall into an agonized embrace, looking into each other's face, their two heads in their four hands, so strained together that the space that divided them seemed to be thrusting them apart. Sometimes in these moments of insurmountable grief Robin would make some movement, use a peculiar turn of phrase not habitual to her, innocent of the betrayal, by which Nora was informed that Robin had come from a world to which she would return. To keep her (in Robin there was this tragic longing to be kept, knowing herself astray) Nora knew now that there was no way but death.

As usual, the appropriate comment on this situation is made by the doctor, seeing Nora out roaming the streets at night in search of Robin. " 'There goes the dismantled—Love has fallen off her wall. A religious woman,' he thought to himself, 'without the joy and safety of the Catholic faith, which at a pinch covers up the spots on the wall when the family portraits take a slide; take that safety from a woman,' he said to himself, quickening his steps to follow her, 'and love gets loose and into the rafters. She sees her everywhere,' he added, glancing at Nora as she passed into the dark. 'Out looking for what she's afraid to find—Robin. There goes the mother of mischief, running about,

trying to get the world home.' " Robin, it should be noticed, is identified with "the world"—which may mean that the world is really no better off than she is—and Nora's failure with Robin, or rather her derangement over this failure, is attributed to her lack of the Catholic faith. The doctor does not say that the Catholic faith would have allowed Nora to control Robin by giving her a framework of moral values, but he does say that, if Nora had been a Catholic, the eccentricities of Robin's nature would not have plunged Nora into an abyss of self-torture and suffering. It is Nora's faith in natural goodness, her uncritical acceptance of Robin because of this faith, which has caused her to suffer. As a Catholic, the doctor implies, she would have been able to rationalize Robin's nature in terms of the Catholic understanding of sin and evil; and while this would not have prevented the evil, it would certainly have eased the disillusionment and suffering. As we shall see later, this passage is crucial to an understanding of the book as a whole.

Nora realizes that Robin is lost to her when, at dawn, she looks out of her window and sees another woman "her arms about Robin's neck, her body pressed to Robin's, her legs slackened in the hang of the embrace." This other woman, Jenny Petherbridge, is the only person in the novel without a trace of tragic grandeur—and this is not surprising, for she is depicted as the essence of mediocrity, the incarnation of the second-hand and the second-rate. Chapter four, in which she makes her main appearance, is titled "The Squatter"—this is the keynote of her character. Her life is a continual infringement on the rights of other people, an infringement that becomes permanent merely by the power of persistence. "Her walls, her cupboards, her bureaux, were teeming with second-hand dealings with life. It takes a bold and authentic robber to get first-hand plunder. Someone else's marriage ring was on her finger; the photograph taken of Robin for Nora sat upon her table." Jenny, again, is the only person in the novel who might be called bourgeois: there is more than a touch of the

nouveau riche in her ostentation and her lavishness with money. Wanting to possess anything that had importance for other people, because she was unable to make anything important herself, "she appropriated the most passionate love that she knew, Nora's for Robin." Jenny's relationship to Robin differs from those of Felix and Nora: she has no intuition of Robin's pathetic moral emptiness, as Nora had, nor does she seize on Robin as a teeming chaos of vitality through which to realize her own values, as Felix had done; she simply appropriates Robin as another acquisition to her collection of objects that other people have valued. Staking her claim to Robin immediately after Nora, Jenny's main function in the novel seems that of underlining the hopelessness of Robin's plight. To fall from Nora to Jenny—to exchange the moral world of one for the moral world of the other—is only too convincing a proof that Robin has still failed to acquire any standards of value.

When, at the conclusion of the fourth chapter, we learn that Robin and Jenny have sailed for America, the novel definitely shifts its focus. Until this point Robin had been its center, both spiritually and actually; but Robin now drops out of sight—though she is talked about at great length—and does not appear directly again until the brief concluding episode. The next three chapters are completely dominated by the doctor, "Dr. Matthew-Mighty-grain-of-salt-Dante-O'Connor," whose dialogues with Felix and Nora—or rather, his monologues, prompted by their questions—make up the bulk of these pages. The doctor serves as commentator on the events of the novel—if events they can be called; and, as T. S. Eliot says of Tiresias in *The Waste Land*, what he sees, in fact, is the substance of the novel. This comparison can bear closer application, for there is an evident—and probably not accidental—similarity between the two figures. Like the man-woman Tiresias, symbol of universal experience, the doctor has homosexual inclinations; like Tiresias he has "fore-suffered all" by apparently being immortal—he claims to have

a "prehistoric memory," and is always talking as if he existed in other historical periods. Like Tiresias, again, who "walked among the lowest of the dead," the doctor is father confessor to the creatures of the night world who inhabit the novel, and is himself an inhabitant of that world; and in his role of commentator, the doctor "perceived the scene, and foretold the rest." For these reasons, Nora comes to him with the burning question—the title of the fifth chapter—"Watchman, What of the Night?" The doctor understands, of course, that she really means: Why has Robin left me? Since there is no rational answer to this question, and the doctor knows it, he proceeds, as he always does, to talk about himself, "for he considered himself the most amusing predicament." But since, as he tells Felix, "no man needs curing of his individual sickness; his universal malady is what he should look to," he talks about his own maladies from this universal perspective; and his monologues, as a result, turn out to be a discussion of the maladies with which the other characters are also stricken. In the passionate and inexhaustible flow of his confessions, the doctor obliquely illuminates the central situation in the novel.

It is impossible to give any exact idea of the doctor's monologues except by quoting them at length; and that would unduly prolong an already protracted analysis. What can be said, however, is this: to find anything approaching their combination of ironic wit and religious humility, their emotional subtlety and profound human simplicity, their pathos, their terror, and their sophisticated self-consciousness, one has to go back to the religious sonnets of John Donne. It is these monologues which prove the main attraction of the novel at first reading, and their magnetic power has, no doubt, contributed to the misconception that *Nightwood* is only a collection of magnificent fragments. Since the doctor always speaks about himself *sub specie aeternitatis*, it is difficult, at first, to grasp the relations between his monologues and the central theme of the novel. T. S. Eliot notes in his preface

that he could place the doctor in proper focus only after a number of readings; and this is likely to be the experience of other readers as well. But, as Eliot rightly emphasizes, the book cannot be understood unless the doctor is seen as part of the whole pattern, rather than as an overwhelming individual creation throwing the others into the background by the magnitude of his understanding and the depth of his insight. Accordingly, we have concentrated our exposition almost entirely on the central pattern, using passages from the doctor's monologues only when the pattern could not have been intelligibly described without them. Now that the pattern has been made clear, however, we can safely approach the doctor a little more closely and explain, if we can, his individual spiritual attitude. It is this attitude which, in the end, dominates the book and gives it meaning.

"Man," the doctor tells Felix, "was born damned and innocent from the start, and wretchedly—as he must—on those two themes—whistles his tune." Robin, it will be remembered, was described as both child and desperado, that is, both damned and innocent; and since the doctor generalizes her spiritual predicament, we can infer that he views the condition of the other characters—and of himself—as, in essentials, no different from Robin's. The doctor, who calls himself "the god of darkness," is a good illustration of his own statement. He is damned by his excess of the knowledge of evil, which condemns him to a living death. "You know what none of us know until we have died," Nora tells him. "You were dead in the beginning." But beyond the doctor's knowledge, beyond his twisted bitterness, is the pathos of abused innocence. "No matter what I may be doing," he cries, "in my heart is the wish for children and knitting. God, I never asked better than to boil some good man's potatoes and toss up a child for him every nine months by the calendar." And after the wonderful Tiny O'Toole episode, in which the doctor reveals all his saint-like simplicity—his attitude towards animals, by the way, reminds one of St. Francis of Assisi—Nora says: "Sometimes I

don't know why I talk to you. You're so like a child; then again I know well enough." Because of his knowledge of man's nature, the doctor realizes that he himself, and the other people in the novel, differ from Robin only in degree; they are all involved to some extent in her desperate dualism, and in the end, he knows, their doom is equally inescapable. "We are but skin about a wind," he says, "with muscles clenched against mortality. . . . Life, the permission to know death." Come to ask the "god of darkness" about that fabulous night-creature, Robin, Nora draws the only possible conclusion from the doctor's harangues: "I'll never understand her—I'll always be miserable—just like this?" To which the doctor responds by one of his tirades that seems to be about nothing in particular, and yet turns out to be about everything.

But the quality in the doctor which grows upon the reader is the practical futility of his knowledge, his own hopelessness and helplessness. In the early chapters he turns up occasionally, exhibiting an insight into the other people which they themselves do not possess, and seeming, for this reason, to stand outside their dilemmas. But as the doctor comes to the foreground, we find this impression completely erroneous. He talks because he knows there is nothing else to do—and because to stop talking would be to think, and to think would be unbearable. "Look here," said the doctor. "Do you know what has made me the greatest liar this side of the moon, telling my stories to people like you to take the mortal agony out of their guts . . . to stop them from . . . staring over their knuckles with misery which they are trying to keep off, saying, 'Say something, Doctor, for the love of God!' And me talking away like mad. Well, that, and nothing else, has made me the liar I am." And in another place he sums it up succinctly: "I talk too much because I have been made so miserable by what you're keeping hushed."

The doctor, however, cannot always maintain this rôle: he cannot always drown his own agony in a flood of talk for the bene-

fit of others. And so, his own tension exacerbated by Nora's increasing hysteria, he bursts forth: "Do you think, for Christ's sweet sake, that I am so happy that you should cry down my neck? Do you think there is no lament in this world, but your own?" "A broken heart have you!" he says scornfully, a few sentences later. "I have falling arches, flying dandruff, a floating kidney, shattered nerves *and* a broken heart! . . . Am I going forward screaming that it hurts . . . or holding my guts as if they were a coil of knives. . . . Do I wail to the mountains of the trouble I have had in the valley, or to every stone of the way it broke my bones, or of every lie, how it went down into my belly and built a nest to hatch me my death there?" It is on this note that we take leave of the doctor, cursing "the people in my life who have made my life miserable, coming to me to learn of degradation and the night." His last pronouncement, made in a drunken frenzy, is one of utter despair: "I've not only lived my life for nothing, but I've told it for nothing—abominable among the filthy people—I know, it's all over, everything's over, and nobody knows it but me—drunk as a fiddler's bitch—lasted too long—" He tried to get to his feet and gave it up. "Now," he said, "the end—mark my words—now *nothing, but wrath and weeping!*" These words should be taken, not as the maudlin mouthings of a self-pitying degenerate, but as the judgment of a man who once asked, with masochistic exultation, "Have I not summed up my time?" knowing that the answer would be Yes. They are the words of a man whose experience comprehends all history, a man with a "prehistoric memory," who has to be admonished by a friend, after telling of an incident involving himself and Catherine the Great, "For Heaven's sake, remember your century at least!"

But although the doctor, as an individual, ends on a note of complete negation, this is not his final judgment on the total pattern of the novel—it is only his final verdict on himself. His attitude towards Robin and the people surrounding her is some-

what more complex. We have already indicated the nature of this complexity by quoting the doctor's remark, when he sees Nora wandering through the streets in search of Robin, that she was a religious woman "without the joy and safety of the Catholic faith, which at a pinch covers up the spots on the wall when the family portraits take a slide." There may be nothing to do about Robin's situation—man's attempts to achieve a truly human existence have always ended in failure—but there is, at least, the consolation of what the doctor calls "the girl that you love so much that she can lie to you"—the Catholic Church. Discussing the confessional with Felix, the doctor describes it as the place where, although a person may lack genuine contrition, "mischief unravels and the fine high hand of Heaven proffers the skein again, combed and forgiven." It would be unwise to bear down too heavily on this point and make the doctor's attitude far more positive than it actually is. His Catholicism, although deeply rooted in his emotional nature, can offer consolation but not hope; and even its consolation is a puny thing, compared to the realities of the human situation as the doctor knows it. "I, as good a Catholic as they make," he tells Nora, "have embraced every confection of hope, and yet I know well, for all our outcry and struggle, we shall be for the next generation not the massive dung fallen from the dinosaur, but the little speck left of the hummingbird." If the doctor can really be said to derive any consolation from his Catholicism, it is the type derived by Pascal from contemplating the wretchedness and insignificance of man, rather than the type derived by Thomas Aquinas from contemplating an orderly and rational moral universe. "Be humble like the dust, as God intended, and crawl," he advises Nora, "and finally you'll crawl to the end of the gutter and not be missed and not much remembered." What the doctor would like to attain is the spiritual attitude that T. S. Eliot prays for in *Ash Wednesday*:

Teach us to care and not to care
Teach us to sit still.

Although the doctor cannot reach this state because he is too deeply involved in the sufferings of others—"I was doing well enough," he says to Nora, "until you came and kicked my stone over, and out I came, all moss and eyes"—he recognizes it as the only attitude offering some measure of inner peace.

Since the doctor is not the center of the pattern in *Nightwood*, the novel cannot end merely with his last appearance. We know Robin's fate from his monologues, but we have not had it presented to us dramatically: all we know is that Robin has gone to America with Jenny. The brief last chapter fills this gap, and furnishes, with the inevitability of great tragedy, the only possible conclusion. In America, Robin soon leaves Jenny and, impelled by some animal instinct, makes her way to where Nora lives. Without Nora's knowledge she lives in the woods of Nora's estate—we are not told how, and it is of no importance—sleeping in a decaying chapel belonging to Nora's family. One night Nora's watchdog scents Robin, and Nora, hearing the dog bark, follows him to investigate. Entering the chapel, she is witness to this strange and horrible scene between Robin and the dog:

Sliding down she [Robin] went . . . until her head swung against his [the dog's]; on all fours now, dragging her knees. The veins stood out in her neck, swelled in her arms, and wide and throbbing rose up on her fingers as she moved forward. . . . Then she began to bark also, crawling after him—barking in a fit of laughter, obscene and touching. The dog began to cry then . . . and she grinning and crying with him; crying in shorter and shorter spaces, moving head to head, until she gave up, lying out, her hands beside her, her face turned and weeping; and the dog too gave up then, his eyes bloodshot, his head flat along her knees.

What this indicates, clearly, is that Robin has abandoned her efforts to rise to the human and is returning to the animal state; the *somnambule* is re-entering her age-old sleep.

So ends this amazing book, which combines the simple majesty

of a medieval morality play with the verbal subtlety and refinement of a Symbolist poem. Our exposition, of course, has barely skimmed its surface: there are ramifications of the various characters that need a detailed exegesis far beyond the scope of our intention. But, limited as it is, our discussion should have proved one point: *Nightwood* does have a pattern—a pattern arising from the spatial interweaving of images and phrases independently of any time-sequence. And, as in *The Waste Land*, the reader is simply bewildered if he assumes that, because language proceeds in time, *Nightwood* must be perceived as a narrative sequence. We can now understand why T. S. Eliot wrote that "*Nightwood* will appeal primarily to readers of poetry," and that "it is so good a novel that only sensibilities trained on poetry can wholly appreciate it." Since the unit of meaning in *Nightwood* is usually a phrase or sequence of phrases—at most a long paragraph—it carries the evolution of spatial form in the novel forward to a point where it is practically indistinguishable from modern poetry.

[To be concluded in the next issue]

BOOK REVIEWS

TWENTY-FOUR POETS¹

By DENIS DEVLIN

In the *Mystery of the Incarnation*, which is at the same time an official ecclesiastical mystery, Mr. Auden has found a mode for the easy exercise of his tragic conscience. *For the Time Being, A Christmas Oratorio* assembles and dissolves those opposites which have wracked the nerves of this poet's anxiety; unifies the "Double Man"; releases that anxiety, whose object is the terrorising Unknown, into a modest optimism of waiting whose reward is certainty, God: all in a fable which expresses the central assumptions of neo-Protestantism, occupied as it has been, in recent years, with self-renewal through a return to its theological origins in the Reformation. For the Reformers, who were theologians and not intentionally social workers, the Incarnation, the Assumption of Flesh by the Word, was the supernatural intervention which most vividly presented the fusion of those contradictions whose irreconcilability outside miracle they were anxious to emphasise as against the mediatory agencies offered by the older Church: grace and predestination, inherent guilt and gratuitous salvation, time and eternity. Spirit incarnate was a dramatic embodiment of the saying, "The Kingdom of God is within you."

¹FOR THE TIME BEING. By W. H. Auden. Random House. 132 pages. 1944. \$2.00. LAND OF UNLIKENESS. By Robert Lowell. The Cummington Press. 43 pages. 1944. \$3.00. THIRTY POEMS. By Thomas Merton. New Directions. 29 pages. 1944. \$1.00. FIVE YOUNG AMERICAN POETS, THIRD SERIES. New Directions. 215 pages. 1944. \$3.00. THE PHOENIX AND THE TORTOISE. By Kenneth Rexroth. New Directions. 100 pages. 1944. \$2.50. BEAST IN VIEW. By Muriel Rukeyser. Doubleday, Doran. 98 pages. 1944. \$2.00. MY COUNTRY. By Russell W. Davenport. Simon and Schuster. 62 pages. 1944. \$1.50. THE COLLECTED POETRY OF DOROTHY PARKER. Random House. 201 pages. 1944. 95 cents. THE MIDDLE KINGDOM. By Christopher Morley. Harcourt Brace. 118 pages. 1944. \$2.00. COMMUNICATION AND OTHER POEMS. By Arthur Steig. International University Press. 47 pages. 1944. \$1.50. THE SOLDIER. By Conrad Aiken. New Directions. 32 pages. 1944. \$2.00. THE SUMMER LANDSCAPE. By Rolfe Humphries. Scribner's. 50 pages. 1944. \$1.75. ALBUM OF DESTINY. By Jesse Stuart. E. P. Dutton. 255 pages. 1944. \$3.75. A POET'S YOUTH. By Allan Dowling. The Wanderer Press. 102 pages. 1944. \$2.50. THE GOLDEN MIRROR. By Marya Zaturenska. Macmillan. 73 pages. 1944. \$2.00. POEMS. By Jon Beck Shank. Alfred A. Knopf. 85 pages. 1945. \$2.50. MODERATE FABLE. By Marguerite Young. Reynal and Hitchcock. 50 pages. 1944. \$2.00. PREFACE TO MATURITY. By Selwyn S. Schwartz. James A. Decker. 77 pages. 1944. \$2.50. NEVERTHELESS. By Marianne Moore. Macmillan. 14 pages. 1944. \$1.25. THE WEDGE. By William Carlos Williams. The Cummington Press. 110 pages. 1944. \$3.50.

This is the order of ideas in which Mr. Auden has come home to roost; in the instance, he makes the brilliant, topical version one would have expected of the dramatic and allegorical possibilities of the sacred tale. In a text whose indications roam from the ancient world to the contemporary, juxtaposing epochs so as to narrow all history into the present tense, the better to floodlight time from eternity, mankind, exposed to the catalytic event, the birth of the Child, anxiously examines its conscience, by groups confesses the typical sin, to be dissolved in the appropriate virtue. The Wise Kings recite the illness of the cultured classes, the Shepherds that of the poor; we get, in an "Angel Chorus" a sort of anthropological song comparing the characteristics of primitive and civilised society; in the "Meditation of Simeon," the patristic theory of all history's preparation for the Coming; and in a speech of Herod a thoroughly engaging but serious spoofing of the liberals. The novelty of eye is as entertaining as ever; as when a shepherd, incongruously like an avaricious, primitive town-builder, sees the robin as "uncivilised" or angels take over the arguments of atheists for their own bright ruses. Here God moves vastly into human affairs, setting all the capitalised abstractions at each other's throats; but Mr. Auden disposes of their enmity by a total surrender to miraculous intervention, as he makes clear: "How could the Eternal do a temporal act/The infinite become a finite fact?/Nothing can save us that is possible:/We who must die demand a miracle."

Mr. Auden manipulates his material like the intellectual Paulist he is, not like a poet; he will persuade and not inspire: the strategic distance he is thus obliged to maintain from his faith in order to set off its value, whole and unprejudiced, to the unbelievers, prevents him from completing his case poetically through emotional identification with its terms; the urgency of his mission by-passes that metaphorical density, the fruit of surrender to the Muse. The nimble universality of this poet's verbal gift, its fecundity of reference, the fruitful attention it claims of the intelligence have been justly praised; but the style is limited by its method and purposes, which are those of the orator; it lives on one plane without resonance. For an example, the following intellectual dexterity and poetic ambiguity. This is from Mr. Auden: passages, both referring to the Fall, suggest the difference between

When Eve, in love with her own will,
Denied the will of love and fell,
She turned the flesh Love knew so well,

To knowledge of her love until
Both love and knowledge were of sin . . .

and this from Mr. Robert Lowell, about the Crucifix:

Here are scales whose Reckoning-weight
Outweighs the apple's fell dejection.

Mr. Auden is too wilful to allow himself the fusion of reminiscences which will generate a statement so full of meanings and so tense; just as his religious temperament is of that absolutist type that cannot admit of justification by "Good Works" unless they are performed in a logical framework, partly sensible here but with the base fixed outside nature. Years ago, when this need drove him to celebrate in the idea of Revolution the prerequisite of the Reign of Justice, Mr. Auden called for a "change of heart": echoing Martin Luther to Erasmus: "a person needs first a change of heart, then good works will ensue." He has now rejoined Luther, moving bag and baggage one step outside life; the Revolution is, finally, the Word.

Mr. Robert Lowell, whose first book *Land of Unlikeness* is a remarkable poetic apparition, will irritate the humanist descendants of Erasmus and shock devout Christians. He is a rebel in formal dress; he apostrophises the Virgin and the Redeemer with the rude but reverent familiarity of a medieval goliard. He has not the detached theological viewpoint of Mr. Auden, but belabours the abstractions of his religious scorn as they take shape out of concrete instances; as he wrestles with them, he is half-fascinated by his demons. The lay world seems to him to make values of evil things, social corruption and war; and, while rejecting the judgment, it is impossible not to be moved by the prophetic gloom of his denunciations. Sometimes, indeed, the burly passion seems a bit facile; in view of his general wrath against Mars, one must smile at the approval of the War of Independence, the pride in the New England breed that "fought the British lion to his knees." And the eccentricity of his position may lead him to castigate the indifferent with the bad and so dilute his salutary emphasis: as, in "Dea Roma," the absurdly total condemnation of the Roman Empire—was there not the gentle asceticism of the Epicureans? and Virgil's Sybil? not to speak of Clement of Alexandria.

But these are the excesses of generous feeling, a quality rare among us, and they are of no importance as one contemplates the richness of Mr. Lowell's poetic endowment. His management of the musical re-

sources of verse, both as to the resonance of words and the rhythm of periods is symphonic, and it answers and deepens the rhetoric which carries the drama of poet and demon—not the Goethean but the intractable old man. His apprehension of Christian Symbolism and classical mythology is sensual, immediate, even though it may be sometimes too opaque in play, like the jugglery of "Satan's Confession." Though he does come near to being the reincarnation of a lost Metaphysical poet, his personal, contemporary use of their conceits, their word-play and their witty passion, frees him from that archaïsation. Closer reading, indeed, reveals a wide allusiveness; a Websterian colouring, a quaint eighteenth-century Mars, even an affinity with the sardonic comic of Joyce.

Father Merton, also a religious poet, gives evidence of the best intentions; he is learned, a lover of elegiac nature and has certainly more franciscan sweetness than Mr. Lowell. But *l'habit ne fait pas le moine*, this is the elegant stock of devotional literature; verse-writing is here a gracious mould of prayer. There is sometimes an attempt at vividness but the metaphors are missed. Kenneth Rexroth has a poetics; it is Objectivism, one of Pound's bad jokes. *The Phoenix and the Tortoise* is a long, philosophical treatise "of what survives and what perishes" in the struggle of personality to establish itself in history. It proceeds under the patronage of Luther, Kierkegaard and Barth—who must be among Mr. Auden's mentors but filter into his verse with so much more tact for form—and is constructed on alternate, insulated paragraphs of "thinking" and "feeling." It is because the latter, which are descriptions of the natural beauty of the scene in which the meditation takes place, show a sensitiveness to traditional aesthetic standards, having at times a subdued Wordsworthian clarity, that one is bewildered by the critical obtuseness which can permit itself to serve up such unappetising speculative ingredients.

Mr. Laughlin should not make his Young Poets write personal manifestoes explaining how they came to write verse. The manifestoes in this, the 1944 volume of the series, have a self-consciousness which shows that they must have been as embarrassing to write as they are to read; one is coy, another truculent, another pretentious; none of them teaches us anything about the creative process, which anyhow, perhaps, is a penitence that should be reserved for the confessional. The contributors are competent but not arresting. Miss Eve Merriam in "I, Well and Civilian" versifies the stock democratic attitudes of the Barcelona period, with the hit-or-miss emotionalism of the news

commentators. The *Poems* of Mr. John Frederick Nims have technical skill and an interesting violence of perception controlled in traditional stanza-forms; they have the rather boisterous cynicism which many Catholic poets affect, in a mistaken zeal, presumably, to qualify as retired worldlings. "The Summer Belvedere" of Mr. Tennessee Williams contains some pretty allegorical ballads as well as over-emphatic free-verse researches into the self. The reviewer has no Spanish and cannot discuss Alejandro Carrion; but it would seem to be unnecessary, from the English. Miss Jean Garrigue ("Thirty-Six Poems and a Few Songs") is by far the best of these poets. Her imagery is delicate and perceived directly; she writes very charmingly of small animals, small creatures generally and exploits with attention the resources of the minor lyrical forms.

The most considerable and ambitious poems in Miss Rukeyser's *Beast in View* are the Elegies, in which we seem to have the realisation of a prescription offered by André Breton some years ago; namely, the exploitation for poetic purposes of the various forms of mental derangement. The speech-sequence of a piece such as the "River Elegy," for instance, with its reiterated ejaculation scarcely controlling the drunken boat like a rudder involuntarily fingered by a pilot half-asleep, is clearly hallucinatory. The rhetorical justification is provided by the denatured form of the Rilkean elegy; the themes are drawn from a passionate absorption in contemporary politics. From an initial statement of despair or anger, through a hurly-burly of cosmic imagery, the poem will climb to judgment and denunciation to conclude in a stoical acceptance:

the sure magnificent music of the defeated heart.

The intellectual savouring (and that alone) recalls Mr. Auden or Hart Crane, in similar spiritual states, though Miss Rukeyser, later in the series, professes a positive hope; and her elegies should probably be read, all and in progression, as Rilke demanded for his. But the meaning is almost drowned in the hysterical proliferation of the décor, itself, all disparity, and suffering unexplained intrusions; the poem flings itself along, an eloquent, angry creature whose direction is mainly clear but whose invective is loaded down with whatever comes to hand. Miss Rukeyser does better within the discipline of shorter Yeatsian lyric forms.

The compilers of comic verse anthologies will find plenty of material in Russell W. Davenport's *My Country*, which abounds in seriously

intended lines like "The salesman and the beautiful cashier" and sings Americans as "The priests of the Pursuit of Happiness." We are informed by the blurb that the roar of American machinery is always in the background of the poem, and sometimes in the foreground; and it is true. There are many magniloquent lists of machinery of all kinds including micrometers, tubes, telepolariscopes and go-gauges. There are recitals of races and places. Milton is mentioned once. There is also a stirring if somewhat shadowy struggle between God and Nothing. Nothing works out in the end to be itself and goes down to defeat shouted diagonally down a very dramatic page; God is of vague ubiquity, perhaps, but anyhow definitely in us on the condition revealed to us in a terrific climactic crash:

If everywhere we search immensity. . . .

It is wasteful even to notice this well-polished sham; unfortunately in view of its vulgar success, idle also.

The image of war, limited to the partial importance which the egoism of the aesthetic vision requires, has been a rewarding penitential exercise for most of the writers under review but has confused the activity of those who have let themselves be swept away by it: Mr. Davenport being a case in point. And Mr. Conrad Aiken's usually cool poetic judgment has given way to the extent of giving us in *The Soldier* an ex-parte justification of war for the consolation of the common soldier. One doubts its efficacy as such but the common reader at any rate will be diverted into the realm of opinion by the obtrusive incoherence of Mr. Aiken's case. War is a "natural" activity since it is an imitation of the internecine slaughter of the animal world, which ensures biological progress. So the winner is right. At the same time it is the purposive instrument of superior communities, who are "true culture-bearers." One may ask, though, which was the happy warrior, Constantine Paleologue or the barbarous Ottoman Sultan. As a last encouragement, the soldier is reminded that, however painful his fight, there is another even more exacting, the spiritual striving of man with himself; but one feels that the glories and miseries of the mental fight, though nobly expressed, are a little out of place, here.

The light verse, much of it not avowedly so, is really less readable than the crudest of apocalyptic writing, since it assumes, for the background of the social allusions it needs, a stable convention which does not exist. Miss Dorothy Parker's world seems slightly askew and ir-

relevant; her cynicism, directed against a comfortable set of idealistic attitudes, insincere. The over-literary amorousness is unconvincing, the irony a false twist in an argument that has begged the question: this consisting in the adoption of stock emotional modes of the nineties and the early part of the century. The diction makes this clear; and yet these spiritual parodies are technically well done on the whole; though there are too many egregious lapses, such as "And proudly waitful of fecundity." Mr. Arthur Steig's "Communications" are neat little satires on the Artist-versus-Bourgeois theme. With all bourgeois tending towards the condition of the artist and the artist at last a frozen bourgeois, surely Paterism is really dead. In Mr. Jesse Stuart's *Album of Destiny*, the pastoral elegy, the plaything of artificial city dwellers, has come down to earth and lost what little it could in the process. For "realism," apparently, we get the correct terms for sowings and soils and trees in their proper society; but it all sounds too good to be true, these ideal rustics with real rustic names pursuing their bookish destiny. Their honest sweat, their good rich clay are successfully emptied of any reality; and flatness of character and incident conveyed in impeccably flat verse. *A Poet's Youth* by Mr. Allan Dowling contains melodious sermons on the pagan virtues and reflections on the joys and justifications of the Whole Man. Such puritans as would obstruct such joys are severely taken to task. Mr. Christopher Morley's elegant trifles in *The Middle Kingdom* are expert tight-rope performances, *vers d'occasion* whose wit is in the balance of the popular with the learned speech. Unencumbered by any fundamental seriousness, "The Old Mandarin" will wring his modest bit of wisdom from topics high and low, and his innocent desire to please is disarming.

In Mr. Rolfe Humphries, the light verse has more depth and roundness than in any of these, springing, no doubt from a more emotional apprehension of guilt as a hindrance to personal perfection. His more important work, however, is of the Symbolist practice, though with a variation. For unlike them, by whom the symbol, the Swan or Byzantium, is described for its own beauty, while to allusion and overtone is left the reference work of allegory, Mr. Humphries elaborates the theme, making his meaning plain in a bald statement at the end. So "The Exiles," a poem about the degradation of refugees from idealists to neurotic, suspicious lost souls, ends:

We have this sickness, wish in vain
We were not exiles. But we are.

And the impressive "Summer Landscape" into whose calm, flowery countryside humanity irrupts, a ruck of murderers, matricides, adulterers and voyeurs, is abruptly ended at this point with the observation: "... and I am all of these." The universality of the reference is lost by the very preciseness of this device; it is a foreign body like the *moralité* of a La Fontaine fable; and this is understood, judging from its omission in less interesting poems, such as "Black Lyric" and "Polo Grounds." In the latter, through the symbolism of baseball, the celebration of the ethnical diversity of America is brilliantly carried off, and more modestly than is allowed by the MacLeishian numbering-off method adopted by Mr. Davenport.

Miss Marya Zaturenska is a graceful executant of variations on the classical myths, which, however, are more of an addiction with her than an instrument of fresh poetic perception. These shy wood-nymphs, though, have the engaging pathos of literary reminiscence but are less striking than the religious meditations such as "Death and Transfiguration" with their greater economy of epithet.

Mr. Jon Beck Shank's *Poems* make a fresh and attractive first offering. He is uncritically intoxicated by the muscular aliveness of physical things; he loves melody and rhetoric, all the accoutrement of fine poetry, and is inspired in many of its old temples, the baroque and the romanesque. But he is a happy pagan and should avoid churches. He rouses opposition when he dons the vocabulary of poets for whom "conscience," "Saviour," "the Word" had a tragic and metaphysical significance unmistakable to us in their characteristic prosodies; these prosodies cannot, as Mr. Robert Lowell shows, be made convincing use of now except with historical irony.

Mr. Selwyn S. Schwartz is a serious and original poet. He makes his communication in a low voice to avoid the false judgment; not a romantic, he looks at reality through the image of himself involved in it but watches himself warily while doing so. In *Preface to Maturity*, through a delicately adjusted machinery of white things, snow, milkman, early morning, the poet traces his growth in relation to love. By means of successive qualification, and definition both through juxtaposition of pictorial incident and metaphor, he delivers his value-words of meaning; in our distending civilization, he seems to say, when all such abstract nouns are looked upon with suspicion, this is the only way, in poetry, of getting across any meaning for "love" and "truth" and of convincing the reader that such concepts are verisimilar for the poet, have suffered experience in his mind and emotion. In "Circuit of

Judgment," in which he fixes his ethical position by reference to symbolically placed Hebrew figures, Job, the Psalms, Noah (though not here with enough clarity) his themes are suggested by the savage aspect of our times; but they are fed into that of the growth of the poet, or of an ideal man; or rather the growth of such a one's courage against death.

Miss Marguerite Young in *Moderate Fable* finds both apt and original images for her dangerous balancing between the great contradictions, part of her strategy being to cut out, as much as possible, the displacement with which an interested self-involvement affects clearness of inspection. This makes, perhaps, the moderation of the fable. It is a seductive inhuman world with its semi-hieratic beasts and cool colouring.

Miss Moore has been overpraised, but by some rather irrelevantly taken to task for the war-poem, "In Distrust of Merits." It will probably be later realised for the perfect piece Miss Moore, at the peak of her power, could not have but written, the shocked exclamation of a mind that has always unobtrusively left the room when the voices got too loud, and has now the garish sinful world thrust improperly upon her. The title of another poem here, "The Mind Is an Enchanting Thing," better describes the grace and the limits of Miss Moore's work; it is to make a delighting pattern, in such a form as Grecian goldsmiths use, of superficial aspects of things and ideas: even her Socrates, for instance, being not the radical thinker of history but that part of him that gave to a thousand years of literature its ideal sage: as modified by the neighbourhood of Miss Moore's elephants. Her juxtaposition of oddities gives off a mass of interrefracted light which is outside the poem and which *makes* it really; one feels the mysterious after-silence and the charming satisfaction of the maker stepping back to look at her work; and one feels that it is a woman who is at home piously among things that have contour and colour, become household gods.

Dr. Williams, who threw out all the literary luggage, continues to stand peering, in a mixture of rage and uncertainty, over the threshold of poetry; he will not face the transformation that might take place inside. In *The Wedge* he reassures himself, and us without a doubt, as to the personal and social justifications for practising art. It is an obsession: anything, a self-questioning, a movement of sympathy, a vivid inspection of animal or landscape can beat up a swarm of aesthetic scruples which turn in on his poetry and preserve it in its bare texture

and rough rhythm. Dr. Williams's most successful verse, accordingly, is concerned with its "pre-art" aspects—he uses the term, though in a different context, in the preface to this book—with how poetry is made and how the man in the street can be brought to value it. For the rest, the poems are singly disappointing and leave the tantalising impression of being unfinished. Their qualities of geometrical clarity and precision of image are cleansing and salutary; they stimulate us to pierce the body, revealing as it were the photographed nerve-system of his art, pleasing the mind, never heating it. That art stays in the light for fear of offending against it, for fear of uttering matter the quotidian conscience may be sorry for; it refuses to lapse into the dark unconscious where imagery is fertilised, stuffs its ears and comes safely and unmusically home past the Sirens. Such reasons are admirable and the poetry of the eye is honest, it has even a fragmentary icicle beauty; but it is a costly gain, to have shut the ear which is the womb of rhetoric. And it is the rhetoric one misses, as becomes clear from reading aloud the longer, more ambitious poems, "Catastrophic Birth" and "To All Gentleness," which are straining towards their other half, the form of which they are foiled.

BOOKS ON EDUCATION¹

BY FRANCIS FERGUSSON

Mr. Ortega's book is based on a lecture he gave, in 1930, to the Federación Universitaria Escolar of Madrid. It was published in Spain in the same year. The present volume was translated by Mr. Howard Lee Nostrand, who also provides an illuminating introduction and footnotes. Mr. Ortega's immediate purpose was to show the students the plight, the potentialities, and the responsibilities of the Spanish University at that moment—near the end of Primo de Rivera's dictator-

¹MISSION OF THE UNIVERSITY. By José Ortega y Gasset. Translated, with an introduction, by Howard Lee Nostrand. Princeton University Press. 103 pages. 1944. \$2.00. EDUCATION AT THE CROSSROADS. By Jacques Maritain. Yale University Press. 120 pages. 1943. \$2.00. THE UNITED STATES AND CIVILIZATION. By John U. Nef. University of Chicago Press. 421 pages. 1942. \$3.00. THE UNIVERSITIES LOOK FOR UNITY. By John U. Nef. Pantheon Books. 42 pages. 1943. \$0.50. REBIRTH OF LIBERAL EDUCATION. By Fred Benjamin Millett. Harcourt, Brace. 179 pages. 1945. \$2.00. TEACHER IN AMERICA. By Jacques Barzun. Little, Brown. 321 pages. 1945. \$3.00.

ship and shortly before the establishment of the Republic, as Mr. Nostrand reminds us in a footnote. But for this purpose he considers the general question of the rôle of the University in the modern world, its present condition, and the direction of reform. Many of his criticisms and recommendations have been made, widely accepted, and in part acted upon in this country. But his statement of the case (with his learning and his social philosophy behind it) has singular freshness and force, defining the main issues of the movement which the other books on this list reflect in more detail, or from particular angles.

Mr. Ortega would have the universities move, in their practice and their planning, away from the multiplication of minor technical studies, the cancerous proliferation of the curriculum which Flexner described in *Universities*, toward economy based on a redefinition of the essentials of education: toward the integration of the curriculum around the Liberal Arts.

Professionalism and specialism, through insufficient counterbalancing, have smashed the European man in pieces; and he is consequently missing at all the points where he claims to be, and is badly needed. The engineer possesses engineering; but that is just one piece, one dimension of the European man: the whole man is not to be found in this fragment called "engineer." . . . The great task before us is something like a jigsaw puzzle: we have to reassemble out of scattered pieces—*disiecta membra*—a complete living organism, the European man.

Mr. Ortega attributes the fragmentation of the curriculum chiefly to the impact of science, and the resulting confusion of the ends of science with the ends of education. He believes that both science and education would be benefited by separating them. Science should be cultivated for its own sake around the edges of the University; at the center he would have a Faculty of Culture "at the height of the times," elaborating and transmitting the best available philosophy of man and society. Between the transmission of Culture and scientific research there is the teaching of the professions, which employ the results of scientific research for ends determined by Culture. Through failure to distinguish between science and the arts of Medicine or Jurisprudence, the conception of the profession, Mr. Ortega thinks, is lost:

The basic idea, the prototype of each profession—what it means to be a doctor, judge, lawyer, professor, etc.—is not at present

delineated in the popular mind, nor does anyone devote himself to studying and formulating such an idea.

What Mr. Ortega means by the crucial concept of Culture may be gathered from his other books better than from *Mission of the University*. Mr. Nostrand has a useful study of it in his introduction; he says that Dilthey was one of the most important influences in the formation of Mr. Ortega's philosophy. But in this book Mr. Ortega wishes only to indicate the direction in which Culture and the curriculum which transmits it are to be sought. The present value of his book lies in the clarity with which he puts his general ideas, and the imagination and insight with which he sketches in the modern confusion.

Mr. Maritain's *Education at the Crossroads* agrees broadly with Mr. Ortega's work, but goes much farther toward "reassembling" a sane conception of the human and his education. Mr. Maritain's elaborate vision of the life of the psyche, its modes of knowledge, and its processes of learning, was most completely set forth in his *Distinguer pour Unir*. It is in the light of that work, using its fertile method of "making distinctions in order to arrive at unity," that he considers education. The book is addressed to a wide American public, but he succeeds in achieving simplicity and clarity without loss of rigor; it is not, for instance, propaganda, like *La Primauté du Spirituel*, but an attempt to grapple with the problem. For admirers of Mr. Maritain this would be sufficient indication of the contents of the book. But I hope it will interest many readers who are more interested in Education than in Mr. Maritain; and such potential readers would want to know whether he is simply speaking for his Church, or for a political party in American education.

Mr. Maritain is not to be confused either with the Roman Catholic Church, or with President Hutchins and Mr. Mortimer Adler. He is, of course, as he reminds us frequently, a Catholic, and he thinks that the Christian "idea of Man is the true one." Thus he writes as a Christian; but he addresses the American public about an education which this public, with its diversity of religious backgrounds and beliefs, might develop for its use, basing it upon the analogies between our ends, rather than upon any of our explicit dogmas. He explains what might be called the faith with which he writes as follows:

In a Judeo-Greco-Christian civilization like ours, this community of analogy, which extends from the most orthodox religious forms

of thought to the mere humanistic ones, makes it possible for a Christian philosophy of education, if it is well founded and rationally developed, to play an inspiring part in the concert, even for those who do not share in the creed of its supporters.

Perhaps because of his very accurate sense of the contemporary scene, Mr. Maritain's book is also to be distinguished from the writings of President Hutchins and Mr. Adler. He has apparently studied with respect the theories and practice of many "schools." When he discusses them—directly he tries to bring out the truth, or the aspect of the truth, on which they are founded, and when he criticizes them it is usually because he thinks they omit important elements, rather than because they include things he does not wish to recognize. He criticizes both Pragmatist and intellectualistic schemes of education in this way. The following remark seems to me to apply to much of President Hutchins's theory:

A certain form of intellectualism seeks the supreme achievements of education in sheer dialectical or rhetorical skill—such was the case of classical pedagogy, especially in the bourgeois era, in which education was a privilege of privileged classes.

This partial truth, or disproportion, he significantly places beside another, apparently quite different one:

Another form of intellectualism, a modern one, gives up universal values and insists upon the working and experiential functions of intelligence. It seeks the supreme achievements of education in scientific and technical specialization.

Questioning Mr. Adler directly, he writes:

I wonder why Mortimer Adler directs his criticism against the *Posteriora Analytica* of Aristotle and not against the Platonic dialectics, which remain imbued with the assumption that knowledge is innate in us and that we can discover it merely by dividing and comparing and struggling with our ideas. Educational emphasis on dialectics is no better than educational emphasis on the syllogism. The order of discovery—and therefore the order of teaching—is experiential-inductive and rational-intuitive rather than inductive and dialectical.

If one attempted to find a quotation which should show how Mr. Maritain differs from Pragmatists and Chicago classicists alike, perhaps this one would do as well as any:

To have made education more experiential, closer to concrete life and permeated with social concerns from the very start, is an achievement of which modern education is justly proud. . . . We must also understand that without abstract insight and intellectual enlightenment the more striking experiences are of no use to man, like beautiful colors in darkness . . . the pursuit of concrete life becomes a decoy if it scatters the attention of man or child among practical trifles, pyro-technical recipes, and the infinity of utilitarian activities, while disregarding the genuine concrete life of the intellect and the soul.

Mr. Maritain's philosophy is Aristotelian, and when this philosophy flourishes, it is essentially syncretic, "subsequent" to the arts, the sciences and the moral and spiritual experience of its times. It was so for St. Thomas, and for Aristotle before him; and Mr. Maritain is, I think, trying to be Aristotelian in this way, rather than in the more *a priori* and intellectualistic manner of some of his supposed allies.

When one turns to the other three books on the list—all by Americans, and all very close to the campuses—one is reminded how much has already been done in this country toward reworking and redefining education, especially college and university education. The movement of reform started about the time of the last war, with Meiklejohn's early writings and experiments. In the last twenty-five years it has produced many vociferous, conflicting schools and a vast literature, very uneven in quality. But since the approach of the present war the main effort has been to find common ground, a curriculum and method which should be generally acceptable: everyone is hastening to defend Liberal Education. One may wonder, in particular cases, whether the antagonists are learning from each other, or merely trying to steal each other's thunder, thinking of public support rather than of education. Nevertheless the present centripetal trend, very much along the lines advocated by Mr. Ortega, is unmistakable. The report issued in May, 1943, by the Commission on Liberal Education of the Association of American Colleges reveals it clearly. President Jones of Bennington described this report as follows:

The report insists that the main purpose of a liberal education is to provide coherence and unity: to "serve the needs of man and the whole order of free life in a democracy." It declares that men and women are liberally educated "to the degree that they are *literate* and *articulate* in verbal discourse, in the languages of the arts, and in the symbolic languages of the sciences; *informed* concerning their physical, social and spiritual environment and con-

cerning their relationship thereto as individuals; *sensitive* to all the values that endow life with meaning and significance; and able to *understand* the present in the perspective of the past and the future, and to *decide* and *act* as responsible human beings."²

This platform sounds a little like the Atlantic Charter, but it indicates a "direction." Mr. Nef and Mr. Millett advocate particular ways of taking it, and Mr. Barzun assumes it as self-evident.

Mr. Nef believes that the coherence and unity which all agree that our education lacks, depends finally upon the revival of Christian values and of philosophy "in the sense of Plato and Aristotle." *The United States and Civilization*, which is dedicated to President Hutchins, is a historic and philosophic analysis of American culture. It may be read as a documentation of his view on education in our society, which he explains in one chapter of this book, and more fully in *The Universities Seek for Unity*.

In both of these books Mr. Nef writes, not as an authority on Economic History (which he is) but as a liberally educated man with a stake in the culture as a whole. He thus makes himself vulnerable to the attacks of specialists, and of those who disagree with his philosophy; and he enters the realm usually occupied by journalists and writers of Outlines. In this difficult position he acquits himself very gracefully. He does not pretend to completeness or finality—his chief purpose, indeed, is to persuade the reader of the need for a synthesis which we now lack. His books are hortatory, preachings if you will, against the background of the present War, much as Mr. Ortega's book emerges against the background of the growing disorder in Spain.

Mr. Nef's philosophy and method might be described as of the school of Maritain. He believes that the process of rebuilding must necessarily be slow and empirical, and that the University which should result is not yet visible, even as a diagram. Accordingly, most of his observations and recommendations have to do with the relation between particular arts and sciences and between them and the central Liberal Arts. He points out that in the case of his own science, Economics, some notion of the culture as a whole, and of its ultimate ends, is necessary in order to be a good economist. But the relation is reciprocal: the meaning and value of the Liberal Arts can only be felt

²Lewis Webster Jones, *The Reconstruction of Liberal Education*. Bennington College Bulletin, Volume Eleven, Number 3, September, 1943.

in connection with the facts and techniques of "the world we live in." Thus Mr. Nef is working at the crucial, the growing point, in many American colleges and universities. St. John's has adopted the heroic policy of requiring its faculty to submit to a liberal education, and this seems to be producing some results from which the rest of us may benefit in time. But in most colleges the problem must appear, rather, that of bringing the actual teachers, with all their prejudices, vested interests, and conflicting philosophies, into some sort of fertile relationship. If authorities in other fields similarly begin, like Mr. Nef, to need a centre, and to try to work out the *general* value of their fields, some sort of integration should result. Mr. Nef seems to rely on the working out of this process, and on the historic centrality of the tradition he believes in, rather than on any attempt radically to re-educate the faculty, as at St. John's, or to set up a complete new educational system, as President Hutchins has advocated.

Mr. Millett's *The Rebirth of Liberal Education* is the outgrowth of a study he made, for the Rockefeller Foundation, of the teaching of the Humanities in Reed, Scripps, Sarah Lawrence, Vassar, Bennington, and Hamilton Colleges, and Cornell, Michigan, Chicago, Iowa, California, Stanford, Colorado, Vanderbilt, Princeton, and Colgate Universities. He does a very thorough and informative job with this formidable assignment. Teachers in the institutions he visited are sure to find omissions or interpretations they can't agree with, but I think all must recognize his honest and disinterested enthusiasm for the Humanities. Mr. Millett indeed thinks of the common problem as being the re-establishment of the Humanities in the center of the curriculum. The most interesting part of his book is his account of methods of teaching literature and philosophy, especially what he calls *The Return to the Text*.

Mr. Scott Buchanan and more recently Mr. Barzun have pointed out that Mr. John Erskine was among the first to "return to the text," that is, to work with students directly, instead of by way of lectures or digests, upon the masterpieces of literature and philosophy. Mr. Millett shows how much this "return" owes to modern literary criticism—to the work of Eliot, Richards, Ransom, and Tate, among others. It is a practice which tends to mitigate the egoistic verbalizing associated with this field. "Boil down Horace, the Elgin Marbles, St. Francis and Goethe, and the result will be pretty thin soup," said Mr. Eliot in 1929. It is impossible to read about the teaching of the Humanities without tasting this thin soup of Mr. Eliot's—in the

wisdom, the mellow personalities, the infectious enthusiasms which we are supposed to extract from the classics, and in the omniscient and impartial "surveys" we make of them. But the classics themselves do not have this quality. The strategy which Mr. Millett advocates, of sticking to the works themselves, their actual form as well as their supposed meaning, has the advantage of making the professor's philosophy of secondary importance. The culture of professor and student, as well as the coherence which all desire, is seen as a by-product, different for different individuals and for each individual at different stages of his development.

One of the most striking innovations of the last twenty years, noticed by all three Americans and by the report, is the acceptance of training in the Arts as an essential part of Liberal Education. It was the Progressive Educators who started teaching painting, music and other non-verbal arts in elementary and secondary schools. They were reacting against the narrow intellectualism of the curriculum, and in its early stages their movement was guilty of obscurantism, and of all sorts of idolatries associated with the Child Centered School. But now this movement is becoming acclimatized in colleges and universities, and being taken up by teachers with different philosophies. It is now possible to see it in a much wider perspective. For instance, it appears that many of the values sought in art training are the same as those sought in the Return to the Text. In Music and Drama, where students are taught to perform, the training of artistic skills and sensibilities and the direct study of masterpieces are often identical. It is being recognized that the arts offer essential modes of knowledge, ways of comprehending experience, which complement those of science and philosophy, and are to be learned by means of different disciplines. More recently the Colleges have been inviting painters, musicians, poets, dancers, to work and teach on the campus: the colleges are now among the chief patrons of the arts in this country. This raises many practical and theoretical questions which we shall see explored in the future. We are accustomed to having Science sheltered by the university, but the Arts have not sought refuge there for many generations. Contemporary artists are not, characteristically, seeking a cultural microcosm such as the university aspires to be, but trying, like Stephen Dedalus, to defend their mystery with "exile, silence and cunning." Is this attitude changing? Should it change? Mr. Ortega pointed out that the ends of scientific research as such are not those of liberal education, and Mr. Maritain's letter to Cocteau, which THE

SEWANEE REVIEW published recently, presents a closely analogous view of Art. It is generally agreed that Liberal Education must not be allowed to lose touch with the actualities of contemporary art and science, on pain of desiccation and futility. But how this relationship is to be made fertile both for art and education we do not yet very clearly see.

I have left Mr. Barzun's *Teacher in America* until the last, because I am not sure it belongs in this list. Mr. Barzun warns the reader in the first chapter that he is writing, not about Education, but Teaching:

I am convinced [he says] that at any time brooding and wrangling about education is bad. It is as bad as it would be to perpetually dig around the roots of government by talking political theory. Both political and educational theory are for the rare genius to grapple with, once in a century. . . . The business of the parent and the teacher is not education but Teaching.

It is obvious what this makes Messrs. Ortega, Maritain, Nef and Millett, all of whom boldly consider Education itself. It seems clear also that Mr. Barzun wouldn't want to be brooding about his book in this context. If I continue, it is because I do not think that Teaching, any more than any other profession, can properly be separated from its end. More educational theory is at least implicit in Mr. Barzun's book than he admits.

"To pass," he says, "from the overheated Utopia of Education to the realm of teaching is to leave behind false heroics and take a seat in the front row of the human comedy." Here in the front row we may comfortably propound two questions about teaching: "How is it done? and finally, what should we teach, and to whom? When we have answered these questions as reasonably and practically as possible," says Mr. Barzun (while we write Roman numeral One in our notebooks), "we shall, I think, find that the sulphur-and-brimstone nebula of Education has disappeared like a pricked bubble." Mr. Barzun then proceeds, in two chapters entitled "Pupils into Students" and "Two Minds, One Thought," to give a lively picture of the teacher's histrionics and dialectics, as he lectures, or conducts seminars, discussion groups and tutorials. "How," he asks, "do you pour a little bit of what you feel and think and know into another's mind?" He has so many answers to this question that I am convinced he is an excellent lecturer, discussion-leader and tutor. But my impression is that

he relies too much on the transfer of information and on dialectics. The criticism which Mr. Maritain makes of Mr. Adler, former teacher and colleague and a fellow alumnus of Mr. Barzun's, applies.

Having explained how teaching is done, Mr. Barzun, under such chapter headings as "The Ivory Lab," "The Classics off the Shelf," "What Once Were Frills," proceeds to run over all of the questions which the other authors think of as connected with Education. How then does he keep his promise, and prick for us that hot, sulphurous and Utopian nebula and bubble? Partly by a Pragmatist refusal to consider the ends implicit in practice; partly by an appeal to History ("The great architect," he reminds us, "is History"); and chiefly by remaining content with the job History is doing on American Education, above all Education at Columbia. He does not like European Education, nor visiting European professors, nor St. John's College (which he judges on insufficient evidence). But he likes a great many teachers in institutions all over the country, who possess fragments of what Columbia has as a whole:

Columbia College is highly representative of modern instruction throughout the country [he says], yet it seems to be only at that college that these separate improvements have been fitted together into an established whole, and the sense of the innovation accepted in its fullness.

Since we have Columbia, which is no more theoretical or Utopian than Grant's Tomb or President Butler, it is impious to dig around the roots. We have an up-to-date normalcy already in existence, which can save us from Education.

Mr. Barzun's book is the longest on the list, and he says many things which seem to me to be excellent, chiefly academic lore, or pungent re-statements of recent changes in college policy. It is hard to do justice to it briefly—partly because it is written in a jocular style not designed for accuracy or consistency. Mr. Barzun is aiming at a wide audience of parents, students and young men who plan to teach, and his purpose is to explain to them what the profession of teaching is. He paints for them a very bright and a very informative picture. Many a normal school senior, reading this book, will suddenly feel that teaching can be "wonderful, and youthful after all." When this happens one must say, I think, that the effect of the book is good. But I am afraid that its effect will also be to make the neophyte believe that his personality and class-room manner are more important

than what he teaches; and that the nimble, not to say "vital" instructor which Mr. Barzun depicts, with his voluminous international correspondence, his stimulating debates with students and colleagues, and his continual writing and broadcasting, will divert the attention of the young from the more nourishing topics with which the other writers are concerned.

DEMOCRACY AND FREEDOM

BY HENRY BAMFORD PARKES

At first sight these books¹ appear to have little in common with one another. They have been written, respectively, by an anthropologist, a philosopher, an economist, a theologian, a novelist, and a critic. Professor Malinowski deduces a scheme of social values from the study of primitive cultures; Professor Perry elucidates and defends American traditions; Dr. Hayek advocates a return to economic liberalism; Dr. Niebuhr reinterprets the democratic ideal in terms of the doctrine of original sin; and Mr. Werfel and Mr. de Rougemont present different varieties of religious belief.

Yet in spite of their professional and ideological divergencies all these authors are really dealing with the same subject: the defense of individual freedom against totalitarianism. All of them are trying, in the light of their own special disciplines and doctrinal preferences, to interpret the meaning of the present war and of the crisis of modern civilization. And all of them are concerned, with greater or less explicitness, with the same basic problem.

The cardinal question which confronts every exponent of the liberal and democratic view of life is that of the relation between individual and group interests and the common good. It is obvious that if civilization is to survive, the claims of the common good must, in

¹FREEDOM AND CIVILIZATION. By Bronislaw Malinowski. Roy Publishers. 338 pages. 1944. \$3.50. PURITANISM AND DEMOCRACY. By Ralph Barton Perry. The Vanguard Press. 688 pages. 1944. \$5.00. THE ROAD TO SERFDOM. By Friedrich A. Hayek. The University of Chicago Press. 250 pages. 1944. \$2.75. THE CHILDREN OF LIGHT AND THE CHILDREN OF DARKNESS. By Reinhold Niebuhr. Charles Scribner's Sons. 190 pages. 1944. \$2.00. BETWEEN HEAVEN AND EARTH. By Franz Werfel. The Philosophical Library. 252 pages. 1944. \$3.00. THE DEVIL'S SHARE. By Denis de Rougemont. Pantheon Books. 221 pages. 1944. \$2.50.

general, be paramount. The individual must, when necessary, subordinate his private interests to those of the political group to which he belongs; the nation must, when necessary, subordinate its national interests to those of the world community. How is this subordination to be brought about?

Traditional liberal doctrine, as formulated during the eighteenth-century Enlightenment, answered this question in much too simple terms. Believing in a divine creator of the universe and in the existence of natural laws which were identical with the laws of reason and of God, the theorists of early liberalism were inclined to assume that there was a preordained harmony between private and public interests. Enlightened self-interest coincided with the good of all. If this coincidence was not always apparent, it was either because men were not yet sufficiently enlightened or because they had been led astray by diabolical influences, as represented by kings, priests and aristocrats. This naïve confidence in man's natural goodness, and this tendency to find some kind of devil in order to account for facts which the theory does not cover, are still characteristic of much liberal thinking. In a modified form they have been inherited by Marxism, which finds its devil in the capitalist system and believes that the interests of each will coincide with those of all after the revolution.

It should be obvious today that there can be no automatic harmony between self-interest and public good, either in any existing society or in any social system which might conceivably be invented. Yet when men react too far away from the doctrine of natural goodness, they end by repudiating liberalism completely. They declare that the necessary subordination of private to public interest can be secured only by coercion or indoctrination and that men must be induced to perform their social obligations either by force or by the inculcation of some irrational system of beliefs, heretics and sceptics being regarded as enemies of the social order.

In all political and moral questions it is dangerous to be too logical, and neither the liberal nor the authoritarian view of human nature should be regarded as wholly right or wholly wrong. Every society is based, in part, on the voluntary coöperation of its members; every society must rely, in some degree, on coercion and indoctrination. Private interest sometimes coincides with the common good and sometimes does not; when it does not, individuals sometimes behave egoistically and are sometimes capable of self-sacrifice. A realistic liberalism, like a realistic conservatism, is therefore a state of mind

rather than a system of doctrines. The liberal dislikes coercion and indoctrination, and wishes that they should diminish rather than increase. He is in favor of any forms of social change which will enlarge the area of voluntary action, and he prefers the dangers of too much freedom to those of too much authority. But if he is realistic, he also recognizes that all men are capable of evil as well as of good, that there must always be some coercive authority, and that the degree of possible freedom must vary at different times and in different circumstances.

Judged by this practical standard, many political theorists appear to exemplify the evils of too much logic. Isolating some particular aspect of man's relationship to society, they arrive at a belief either in absolute liberty or in absolute authority. Some of them declare that if some kind of social change were made, all men would voluntarily become coöperative; others argue that since all men are naturally evil, the public good can be maintained only by dictatorship. This kind of absolutistic thinking is the greatest danger to democratic government as practised in Great Britain and the United States, which is based on the thesis that no one point of view ever has a monopoly of the truth. The most ardent champion of liberalism may, in practice, promote a spirit of fanaticism which is incompatible with the workings of democratic government, if his defence of freedom is too one-sided and too partial. For this reason the most important question to be asked of any political theorist by the advocate of constitutional democracy is how far he distorts reality by omission. What aspects of the relationship of the individual to society does he tend to ignore? To what extent does he encourage intolerance by presenting an oversimplified view of the situation?

None of the six authors discussed in this review believes either in absolute liberty or in absolute authority. All of them support constitutional government, and show an awareness of the complexity of political problems. Yet—as is inevitable in any theoretical discussion—each of them tends to isolate some particular aspect of his subject and to give it exaggerated importance. The authors can be divided into two groups, since Malinowski, Perry, and Hayek are rationalists, while Niebuhr, Werfel and De Rougemont believe that political problems cannot be solved without recourse to supernatural faith. In general, the rationalists display too much confidence in man's capacity for voluntary coöperation and self-sacrifice, while the supernaturalists show an equally exaggerated pessimism.

The main purpose of Professor Malinowski's book is to show, from anthropological evidence, that democracy is the best social system. In order to reach this conclusion, he presents a new definition of freedom. Men are free, he argues, to the extent that they participate in the formation of social plans, in the activities needed to realize them, and in the enjoyment of the results. Freedom in the sense of absence of restraint he regards as a meaningless conception. A society in which all men possess these forms of freedom is democratic, by contrast with those dictatorial or militaristic societies in which the making of plans and the distribution of rewards are controlled by a ruling class. According to Malinowski primitive societies were normally democratic, and the militaristic mode of organization should be regarded as a relatively late development and usually as culturally retrogressive.

But if freedom means participation in collective activities, then (as Malinowski realizes) it is impossible unless there is a common agreement on fundamentals and a general acceptance of the cultural tradition. He says:

The leitmotif of all our arguments will be that all those constraints which are dictated by cultural determinism are as indispensable to successful behavior as are the laws of nature and of the organism. Freedom, indeed, consists in the lead and guidance which the rules and laws of culture give man.

Freedom in primitive communities is very definitely associated with a conservative attitude towards well-established rules and values.

All the arguments of the present essay hinge around a simple proposition: freedom is the essence of civilization because freedom is neither more nor less than obedience to the rules of science, of social justice, and of ethics.

Thus by emphasizing the importance of democratic participation Malinowski arrives at a defense of cultural tradition. This is a valuable counteractive to the kind of liberalism which atomizes society into isolated individuals; but it becomes dangerous if it is regarded as the whole truth. How are rules of social justice and of ethics established, and how is the individual induced to obey them? Malinowski appears to believe that they are the products of reason, and that individuals will therefore conform to them voluntarily. Unfortunately neither of these suppositions is altogether true. The social and ethical rules prevalent in any particular society are always partially irrational, and some degree of coercion or indoctrination is always required in order

to secure conformity. And in order to prevent social conformity from becoming excessive, the kind of freedom which Malinowski disparages—freedom from restraint—is indispensable. It is true, as he argues, that democracy means participation, and that men cannot participate in the activities of their society unless they conform with its social arrangements and its ethical code. But if we regard this as the whole truth, then we shall arrive at decidedly illiberal conclusions. We shall end by denying freedom to sceptics, heretics and rebels. A healthy society should be based on democratic participation, but it should always have room also for the non-conformist.

While Professor Malinowski deals with cultural tradition in general, Professor Perry is concerned with a specific example: the cultural tradition of the United States. Disturbed by the tendency of the American people to repudiate the two chief elements in their cultural heritage—the morality of Puritanism and the liberal idealism of the Enlightenment—Perry reexamines them. His own ultimate standard of judgment is the principle that goodness means the recognition, harmoniously and in due proportion, of “the claims of all interests, without bias in favor of any interest, such as self-interest, class interest and national interest.” This he regards as “the moral standard par excellence” and as a formulation of the best elements in the European philosophical and religious tradition. He uses this standard in order to show that both seventeenth-century Calvinism and eighteenth-century liberalism are still, in large measure, worthy of our respect.

Puritanism and Democracy is much too long, and its style, over long stretches, is almost as arid as that of the Puritan divines with which it is so largely concerned. The persevering reader must admit, however, that it makes a strong case. The moral seriousness of the Puritans and their devotion to public welfare, although too often accompanied by rigidity and intolerance, were qualities of considerable social value. The same can be said of the liberal idealism which animated the American Revolution. Both Puritanism and liberalism promoted a kind of social harmony, thereby making possible the form of freedom which Malinowski recommends; and both of them induced individuals to subordinate their private interests to the public good.

Professor Perry seems to believe that once he has shown these attitudes to be socially advantageous, his task has been completed. But his book suggests some important questions, the significance of which he does not sufficiently recognize. Both the Puritans and the men of the Revolution preferred public good to private interest, but they did

so not merely because of respect for Perry's "moral standard par excellence" but also because of the emotional dynamism of a system of beliefs. The Puritans took life seriously because they believed, as a literal fact, that levity would lead to eternal damnation in hell. The men of the Enlightenment fought for the rights of man because they believed them to be in accordance with "the laws of nature and of nature's God." Professor Perry pays little attention either to the theology of Calvinism or to the metaphysics of deism; yet we cannot understand the social attitudes of the past unless we understand the beliefs with which they were associated. Men are not by nature either wholly rational or wholly moral; and from the evidence of history it would not appear that men in the mass can be induced to subordinate their private interests to public good except under the influence of a system of beliefs. But any system of beliefs always contains some elements of irrationally and, if it is interpreted too literally and too rigidly (as was the case with Calvinism), it becomes oppressive. Society therefore needs heretics. Perry is undoubtedly correct in arguing that we under-estimate the good qualities inherent in the early American tradition; but if we set out to recapture the moral seriousness of the Puritans, we may recapture their intolerance also. It is arguable that modern society has reacted too far from the Puritan virtues, and that the balance needs to be redressed; but if we are to avoid fanaticism, we must never stress one attitude exclusively. Professor Perry's defence of Puritanism needs to be balanced by a defence of the social value of levity.

There is a similar one-sidedness, and a similar failure to take account of human irrationality, in Dr. Hayek's position. *The Road to Serfdom* does not present any new thesis; it restates the argument which Hayek and Von Mises have been advocating for twenty years: that a planned economy means totalitarianism, and that only a régime of economic liberalism can preserve the rights of the individual. Unlike Von Mises, Hayek is willing to allow some interference by the state, provided that its purpose is to maintain competition and increase security rather than to establish over-all planning; but he does not specify how this should be done. *The Road to Serfdom* is an admirably written polemic; but it fails to put forward any usefully constructive proposals.

The most obvious difficulty with the Von Mises-Hayek argument is not in its economics but in its politics. Dr. Hayek seems to believe that men are guided by reason and are generally willing to subordi-

nate private interest to public good. But the adoption of liberal principles a century ago was not due merely to the rational arguments adduced in their support; it was also because at that time they had the force of a religion. The rules of the free market were identified by the early economists with the laws of nature and of God, so that in establishing a régime of laissez-faire men were obeying the "invisible hand" of their Creator. And the abandonment of economic liberalism has not been caused merely by the arguments of economists and social critics in love with the idea of planning, as Hayek suggests. Much stronger and more elemental forces have been at work. Pressure groups have refused to accept the sacrifices imposed upon them by the rules of the free market and have insisted that the government should intervene in order to give them protection. For this reason any return to pure economic liberalism at the present day must be regarded as politically impossible. Economic liberalism might be beneficial to the world community as a whole; but it would undoubtedly mean losses for special interests. Businessmen would have to forego the high profits of tariff protection, and trade unions would have to accept lower wages. But can any realistic observer of modern politics have any serious expectation that the reasoned arguments put forward by economists like Hayek will carry more weight than the demands of pressure groups?

According to Dr. Hayek the only alternative to economic liberalism is the totalitarian state. This kind of either-or argument is quite unrealistic and very dangerous. We may regard it as certain that the American people will not establish a pure economic liberalism, although they may show a tendency to react in that direction as soon as the war has ended; but there is no good reason for expecting that they will lose their dislike for totalitarianism. Presumably they will continue to maintain some kind of mixed system, which will by no means be free from disturbances and imperfections but which will have room both for some of the benefits of free enterprise and some of the benefits of government planning. The only real obstacle to this kind of illogical compromise is the spirit of fanaticism inculcated by logicians like Dr. Hayek on one side and the over-all planners on the other side.

The three remaining authors do not make the mistake of overestimating man's capacity for reason and for moral action. On the contrary, by emphasizing the weaknesses of human nature they arrive at the conclusion that our society cannot be saved without religious beliefs.

Dr. Niebuhr, both as man and as thinker, is one of the most invigorat-

ing figures of our time, and his *Nature and Destiny of Man* ranks among the great works of the past decade. More than any other living theologian, he has shown how the Christian view of life can be reinterpreted in terms of contemporary significance. The argument of *The Children of Light and the Children of Darkness* is that Christian theology, with its recognition both of man's capacity for justice and of his propensity towards the pursuit of self-interest, provides the only realistic justification of the democratic faith.

The good, according to Niebuhr, means "the harmony of the whole on various levels." Men are able to appreciate "common notions of justice which transcend all partial interests"; otherwise democracy would be impossible. But they also have a propensity towards evil: in other words, towards the "assertion of some self-interest without regard to the whole." The individual, being both a part of nature and also able to transcend it, feels an isolation and an anxiety which cause him to seek security for himself in violation of the order of the whole. In consequence "there is no level of human moral or social achievement in which there is not some corruption of inordinate self-love." This truth about human nature has been ignored both by rationalistic liberals and by Marxists, who are "children of light" in that they believe in the supremacy of communal over private interests, but who are guilty of a sentimental optimism in their expectation of "achieving an easy resolution of the tension and conflict between self-interest and the general interest." These "children of light" have shown less realism than the "children of darkness," who assume that men must always be governed by self-interest and refuse to make the attempt to transcend it.

But although the Christian view of man recognizes the reality of evil, it also affirms the possibility of good; and Dr. Niebuhr deduces from it a defense of democracy. Belief in original sin has usually been associated with authoritarianism. But if all men and all human institutions are tainted with morbid self-love, then no form of authority can be trusted:

In all non-democratic political theories the state or the ruler is invested with uncontrolled power for the sake of achieving order and unity in the community. But the pessimism which prompts and justifies this policy is not consistent; for it is not applied, as it should be, to the ruler. If men are inclined to deal unjustly with their fellows, the possession of power aggravates this inclination. That is why irresponsible and uncontrolled power is the greatest source of injustice.

The institutions of individual freedom and social democracy must therefore be maintained and extended because of the checks which they impose on the lust for power which is inherent in all men. "Man's capacity for justice makes democracy possible; but man's inclination to injustice makes democracy necessary."

Dr. Niebuhr's book is a brilliant political analysis, in the best American tradition (its argument has affinities both with Roger Williams and with *The Federalist*); and his view of human nature is more comprehensive, and hence more realistic, than that of the other authors discussed in this review. He lays more emphasis on man's natural badness than on his natural goodness, and declares that men need religious faith in order to overcome their sense of insecurity and their morbid self-love; but, more fully than most theologians, he recognizes that no religious institution and no body of dogmas is free from human imperfection, and that there is no more dangerous form of morbid self-love than that exemplified by authoritarian religion. Niebuhr's kind of religion could never become oppressive.

Unfortunately most men can be swayed only by a simpler, more literal and less sophisticated faith. There are elements of ambiguity in Niebuhr's own religious position, which confirm its spirit of tolerance but which also diminish its emotional force. The reader of Niebuhr is never wholly sure how far he regards Christian theology as a literal statement of facts about the universe and how far as a symbolic statement of facts about human nature. In *The Nature and Destiny of Man*, for example, he shows that the doctrine of the resurrection of the body (which implies that every part of the human personality is capable of regeneration) is theologically more meaningful than its modern substitute, the immortality of the soul. But does it follow that this doctrine is true and if so, in what sense? Yet if Protestant Christianity ever regains its vitality as a social force, it will probably be because its doctrines are once again accepted as literal facts. Men are not usually moved to transcend their egoism by a faith which they regard as partially symbolic. And when a faith is regarded as literally true, it inevitably becomes intolerant. Niebuhr himself succeeds in avoiding the dangers inherent in his emphasis on man's need for religion; but they should not be forgotten.

These dangers are more conspicuous in the books of Mr. Werfel and Mr. de Rougemont. These two writers agree with Dr. Niebuhr that there can be no genuine freedom without religious faith, but they state their opinions through affirmation rather than through argument,

and neither of them deals with the political and intellectual difficulties of the religious attitude. Werfel denounces the "naturalistic nihilism" of our time, and insists on man's need for God. De Rougemont asserts the transcendental reality of good and evil. *The Devil's Share* is much the better of the two books. Werfel is too fond of melodramatic rhetoric, and indulges in too much beating of the breast and wringing of the hands. De Rougemont, on the other hand (as readers of his *Love in the Western World* will recall), has a lucid and masculine intelligence and a capacity for genuinely original thinking. The argument of *The Devil's Share* is that we must recapture the consciousness of "our bonds with the whole of the Universe" and of "an absolute which, independent of ourselves, would be the universal measure of good and evil." These are "the two sources of Order," without which the individual can have no sense of responsibility and consequently no freedom. For "there is freedom only among men who realize their vocation and follow it."

If this were the whole truth, then the prospects for the survival of freedom could not be considered good. The conception of a vocation is essentially religious. But western society is no longer motivated by any strong religious beliefs. And religion is unlikely to be restored as the animating force of the social structure except through methods of coercion and indoctrination which would be incompatible with the ideal of individual freedom. This is the kind of paradox to which liberals have often been driven. In our own day it is exemplified not only by the exponents of religious tradition but also by many liberals of the left, who look to some form of political authority which will reshape the social system according to their own notions of what freedom means and reeducate their fellow citizens. Like Rousseau, Robespierre, and Lenin, they believe that men must be "forced to be free."

Like most other political affirmations, however, De Rougemont's conclusion is only an aspect of the truth. In view of that "tension and conflict between self-interest and the general interest" which Niebuhr emphasizes, we may agree that society must maintain a sense of vocation among a sufficient number of its members, at least during times of crisis, in order that they may be capable of transcending self-interest and serving the common good. But the individual who is wholly dominated by his vocation is likely to be a narrow fanatic. The belief of the early liberals that enlightened self-interest coincided with the general good, and that the individual who most fully realized his own potentialities was also benefiting society, is also an aspect of

the truth. Man is a complex creature; and the rule that excess of any kind is dangerous is perhaps the only moral generalization which is not capable of contradiction. In an age of religion there is a need for more levity and more preaching of enlightened self-interest. An irreligious age like our own may well need a reaffirmation of the puritan sense of vocation. But in view of the growth of organized intolerance and the tendency to settle disagreements by force rather than by discussion, what we need even more is to preserve a sense of balance and moderation and a recognition of the value of variety. Totalitarianism, like all forms of fanaticism, springs from the tendency to assert some partial aspect of the human situation at the expense of the whole.

A SERIOUS FRENCHMAN¹

BY HARRY LEVIN

The consideration that best justifies the appearance of these volumes, and perhaps explains why Charles Péguy has so seldom been considered in English, is that he upsets all preconceptions of a French writer. That generic figure, posing upon some pedestal in our minds, remains the academic precisian, the cynical rationalist. Péguy, while not less important or typical than many who live up to the textbook requirements, is their very antithesis. Hence his reputation has been strengthened by the reversals that have overtaken the Third Republic. Martyred by the first World War, he has been canonized by the second. Frenchmen, both at home and abroad, have taken their solace from his writing, which has been equally—though differently—cited to support the contending slogans of *Famille, Travail, Patrie* and *Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité*. Happily, a saint is not to be blamed for the sins of those that pray to him. Nor has Péguy been seriously compromised by his son Marcel, the continuator of *Les Cahiers de la Quinzaine*, who greeted the German occupation of Paris with a book describing his father's doctrines as the French equivalent of National

¹BASIC VERITIES. By Charles Péguy. Translated by Anne and Julian Green. Pantheon Books. 282 pages. 1943. \$2.75. MEN AND SAINTS. By Charles Péguy. Translated by Anne and Julian Green. Pantheon Books. 303 pages. 1944. \$2.75.

Socialism, the last desperate effort to "save the race by destroying the republic."

No such inference is encouraged by the liberal Catholic spirit in which Anne and Julian Green have edited and translated the present selections. And sober truth, the verities as well as the angels, would seem to be on their side. "You forget, you disregard the fact that there has been a republican mysticism. And to forget and disregard it does not wipe out the fact that it did exist. Men have died for liberty as men have died for faith." So Péguy might now address the collaborationists as he once addressed the younger generation. His explicit testimony might easily be prolonged through several additional volumes, consistently reaffirming his dual allegiance to the Church and the Republic. Christianity with its saints, Revolution with its heroes—one can hardly say to which he was more devoted. While the clericals, whom he militantly opposed, played politics under cover of religion, he tried to square his religious convictions with his political principles. The defence of Dreyfus, and the other causes he took up, became fervent articles in Péguy's credo. From first to last he preached, and practised, *la mystique républicaine*.

From his earliest catechisms and schoolbooks, Péguy tells us, he always took everyone seriously, always believed everything he was told. It was this high seriousness that helped him, no doubt, to escape from conventional frivolity; but, in escaping what may be a French weakness, he abandoned one of the prime sources of French strength. His will to believe, accordingly, was untempered by critical judgment. Catholic in the broadest sense, his beliefs were so all-embracing that they strained the credulity of his followers. To his utopia, *la cité harmonieuse*, fraternity was more essential than equality. His distrust of the middle classes was based on a respect for labor and a sense of craftsmanship. His reiterated plaint, "The modern world debases," was a plea for cultural tradition in all its phases—biblical, classical, medieval. It has been all too easy, with the positive and constructive force of his personality no longer behind them, to turn these affirmations into denials. Though the values he championed stand in ever-increasing jeopardy, he has provided their contemporary exponents with no criterion for distinguishing between progress and reaction, resistance and collaboration, allies and enemies. Though he left a rich testament, he left it so encumbered and entangled that his heirs may not be speaking to each other for still another generation. "The in-

vasion which crosses the threshold of the inner life," he warned them, "is infinitely more dangerous . . . than territorial occupation."

Doubts and dilemmas were resolved, however, by the staunch independence and wholehearted vigor of the man himself. His Catholicism was unorthodox and his socialism was not doctrinaire. He overrated the *dreyfusard* Bernard-Lazare and underrated the pacifist Jaurès because he judged others as a comrade-in-arms. So must he be judged. It is the personal inflection that integrates his ideas and lends form to his writing. The same style is broad enough to encompass poetry and prose, intimate journals and journalistic polemics, the speech of the Orléans peasantry and the jargon of the École Normale. Puns, proverbs, and prayers, counterpointing his exhortations, reassert the coherence of the French language, as well as the continuity of French culture. He attains with ease the note that Whitman forces. Our best analogy is Emerson's well-seasoned mixture of pith and eloquence, homely idioms and dazzling generalizations. These English translations, literal to the verge of gallicism, are properly chaperoned by their French texts. The editorial process has been a devious one: the extent of Péguy's work is so scattered, and its tone so oracular, that it adapts itself to this kind of sibylline sifting. Yet fragmentation has its concealed dangers: a casual sentence, paraphrasing Bergson's remarks on genius and talent, is wrenched from its context and printed here as an original aphorism.

An essay on Péguy's verse, by calling Francis Thompson "his elder and greater brother," reveals little beyond Mr. Green's critical limitations. But the poems are self-revealing; when Péguy's prose waxes lyrical, they remain colloquial. *Passions* and *mystères* after the medieval fashion, they invite God to soliloquize in the language of the people. And they are not, for all their seriousness, devoid of idiomatic humor, as when they describe Christ's interview with the Doctors:

Il était trop grand parmi les docteurs.
Pour les docteurs.
Il avait fait voir trop visiblement.
Il avait trop laissé voir.
Il avait trop manifesté qu'il était Dieu.
Les docteurs n'aiment pas ça.
Il aurait dû se méfier. Ces gens-là ont de la mémoire.
C'est même pour cela qu'ils sont docteurs.

Here, championing as always the spirit against the letter, is where

Péguy joins the Emersons, the Carlyles, the Nietzsches, and the minor prophets who have cried in the wilderness of modernity. Few of them, significantly, have been French. If this justifies Péguy's unique position, it also explains why—despite his generous and heartening qualities—we have never needed him. For ours is an affirmative tradition, too rarely questioned or interrupted, an everlasting yea. The spirit that denies, the critical temper, the traditional virtues of the major French writers—we stand in greater need of these. Today more than ever, when every publicist is touting his own inflated version of faith, we need reason. Péguy is still enough of a Frenchman to remind us that the honest man must be a perpetual renegade, his life a perpetual infidelity. "For the man who wishes to remain faithful to truth must make himself continually unfaithful to all the continual, successive, indefatigable renascent errors. And the man who wishes to remain faithful to justice must make himself continually unfaithful to inexhaustibly triumphant injustices."

WESCOTT, PROKOSCH, AND THREE OTHERS¹

By IRENE HENDRY

The five novels in this group are probably typical of the output of a publishing season. One is a first novel. One is the first publication of a well-known writer in several years; two are by writers who keep up a steady output. Two have the war as a background, but none deals with combat or organized armies; one is laid in the recent past of the twenties, and another in the remoter past. In form, one makes use of symbolism and a decorative prose style; one follows classic American naturalism; the others fall somewhere between.

If any trend is suggested in these novels, it is toward the consideration of character against a war background; within a month, however, there could be a new spate of front-line books celebrating mass action

¹APARTMENT IN ATHENS. By Glenway Wescott. Harper and Brothers. 268 pages. 1945. \$2.50. AGE OF THUNDER. By Frederic Prokosch. Harper and Brothers. 311 pages. 1945. \$2.50. DASHA. By E. M. Almedingen. Harcourt, Brace and Company. 278 pages. 1945. \$2.50. THE CRADLE WILL FALL. By Stephen Seley. Harcourt, Brace and Company. 220 pages. 1945. \$2.00. FURY IN THE EARTH. By Harry Harrison Kroll. Bobbs, Merrill. 264 pages. 1945. \$2.50.

and the mechanical life. The only quality shared in common by them—and it would probably hold for the publications of any season—is a tension between the demands of life and the demands of art. This takes several forms. It can be simply a tension between surface and content, as in *Age of Thunder*, or theme and technique, as in *The Cradle Will Fall*. It can also be a tension between simplification and richness, or solution and understanding, or between loyalty to the particular and a need to transcend it.

In the ideal novel, perhaps, these tensions are resolved by being perfectly balanced. In the present group of novels, the authors lean to one side or the other—mostly to the side of life, however—and achieve no resolution, but their approach to resolution can be measured by the degree of tension they allow to come through.

The relation of *Apartment in Athens* to Glenway Wescott's earlier novels has been obscured by the fact that it deals with the sufferings of a Greek family under the German occupation and was apparently intended by the author to "prove" that the Germans are incurably evil. Nevertheless, his latest book recapitulates the themes that have been developing in Mr. Wescott's work for twenty years. Mrs. Helianos, the bourgeois Greek housewife struggling to overcome her weaknesses of body and spirit, is his familiar matriarchal character, introduced by Hannah Madoc, the quasi-earth goddess of *The Apple of the Eye*, continued in his Wisconsin farm women, and given a cosmopolitan veneer in Madeleine Cullen, the "virtuous passionate hard-hearted woman" of *The Pilgrim Hawk*. In the same way, his affirmation of the intimacy and interdependence of marriage, rediscovered by husband and wife through their common humiliations at the hands of Major Kalter, is a continuation of the "domesticated love" theme of *The Pilgrim Hawk*, where it is symbolized in Mrs. Cullen's falcon. This is in part a resolution of the early unhappy marriages, which leave man and woman irreconcilably apart through an inversion of sexual attraction; it also paves the way for Mrs. Helianos's acceptance of her social and moral duty and her final emergence alone as the dominant character in the book.

The concepts of restraint, responsibility, ritual and duty have always clustered about the figure of the woman in Wescott's novels; the progression has been from a conflict between man and woman, children, and parents, sex and love, to the equilibrium of marriage, and then a subordination of the children, so that Mrs. Cullen is allowed to neglect her children and Mrs. Helianos gives her son to the underground—a

ritualistic sacrifice that is prefigured in *The Grandmothers*, when Rose Tower sends her sons off to war. It is the foster-mother relationship that comes to be stressed in the last book as it was in the first: Mrs. Helianos serving the resistance movement, as Old Han, nurse and midwife, serves her neighbors.

Even the dubious thesis of German incurability in *Apartment in Athens* has grown out of the preoccupations of earlier works—Mr. Wescott's biological fatalism and his own dualism. In *The Apple of the Eye*, it centers about the conventional evil of the twenties, puritanism, represented in Dan Strane's mother and aunt, and resisted by the men, Dan, his Uncle Jule, and Mike, in *The Grandmothers*, it links the futility of the lives of the two women—the earthy and the morbidly religious—with the historical failure of America. In the present book, the reciprocity between the world and the nature of man has shifted, with a national split personality as the inevitable force; in his last letter from prison, Mr. Helianos warns that the Germans intend to "come back," that there is a hopeless dualism in the German nature which makes them seem to change after a war, and that the good Germans are most dangerous because "they bait the trap for the others." But even here there remains a suggestion of a more universal type of evil and of what the author calls in *The Pilgrim Hawk* "passage of time, the punishment":

But sometimes it seems to me, having been childish myself all my life, that all the good-hearted men and women on earth are children, and only the evil ones have mature minds. . . . Tell Petros, whenever he hears foolish political men babbling about permanent peace, to ask them: what about permanent life? Do they believe in that, too? What about permanent love, permanent health, permanent talent? When we are sick and we go to see a doctor, do we expect him to promise us immortality?

The reception of *Apartment in Athens* has been extremely favorable, but its subject-matter and its apparent anti-German attitude have been emphasized, not its use of Mr. Wescott's established forms and themes. This is understandable, because the attitude and subject-matter he has taken over from life have absorbed his forms and themes, not fused with them. Perhaps Wescott never intended a fusion, but used the designs of his earlier novels because they were convenient; perhaps he means the readers of *Apartment in Athens* to think only of the necessity for a "hard peace," not to find implications for their own lives in

Mrs. Helianos's return to the condition of Old Han and the pioneer Towers. Nevertheless, his new novel is most successful when it falls into the lines and meanings of the earlier ones, and weakest when it points outward only to the specific wartime situation that inspired it.

Age of Thunder, by Frederic Prokosch, also embodies a theme that has been recurring in earlier works, but the pattern in which it recurs is equally predictable: escape or migration across picturesque or exotic territory by a group of heterogeneous characters, one of whom, usually a handsome and adventurous youth, becomes the hero and the author's spokesman. The theme itself is hardly more than a mist of emotion hovering over the action—a vague sense of rootlessness and decay, uncertainty and nostalgic quest, that accommodates itself readily to specific situations. *Age of Thunder* brings it to the mid-point of the war, with a refugee journey across occupied France to Switzerland signifying emergence from fear, "the endless night of the world," into peace through love. "We must love one another or die," says the old peasant woman discovered praying in the chapel across the border. The peace-fear motive is repeated throughout the book in symbolism of light and dark: the refugees travelling at night; the West Indian negro Quivar, whose thoughts are described as "dim, prehistoric shadows," shooting from ambush into a group of blond German soldiers; the hero longing to leap back into the darkness of his childhood, or telling Susanna, the beautiful Italian girl, that "love is the last thing to keep the darkness from entering us"; the lovers crossing into Switzerland over a bridge at dawn.

Age of Thunder is the only novel in the group to make any extensive use of symbolism. (In *Apartment in Athens*, there is one significant example of internal symbolism, which occurs also in *The Pilgrim Hawk*: the woman unconsciously assuming the attitude of an heroic statue, revealing herself as the fertility goddess in a moment of physical repose as Wescott's early characters reveal themselves in physical movement.) For the most part it is successful, as it is in the light-and-dark contrasts and in the ambiguity of the "secret agent" rôle played by Jean-Nicolas Martin, Mr. Prokosch's current hero, who arrives in France by parachute with a mysterious letter instructing him to "try to localize the decay; try to identify the poison." The author's meanings, however, are not always so well controlled. The general atmosphere of his book is a continual state of flux, with everything that is not clearly a symbol apparently on the point of turning into one. The personages Jean-Nicolas meets on his journey often seem more aware

of their own significance than the reader is ever allowed to be, and just as often they vanish without having performed any but an ornamental function.

Partly, this may be an illusion of the style and the absence of normal development in the novel, which progresses in a series of *tableaux*; it also points to something more fundamental. Mr. Prokosch has been accused of using the methods of poetry in fiction, but these are not the methods of the "intellectual" poets of his own time. In spite of the contemporaneity of his specific situations and backgrounds, he is not so much interested in general ideas as in *décor*, in sequences of pure experience, in pure emotional exultation. In fact, with his lush imagery, his diffused *Weltschmerz*, the distinct "graveyard" quality of his crumbling chateaux, abandoned barns and bombed-out villages, his mysterious journeys interspersed with violence and assorted amours, recitals of adventure and philosophical disquisitions on nature and love, Prokosch is closer to the Shelley of *Alastor* and the Byron of *Childe Harold* and *Don Juan* than he is to Auden and Spender, although he often shares the subject-matter and the attitudes of the modern poets.

Does this make Frederic Prokosch a bad novelist or an unrepresentative one? I am not sure that it does. It may be that Shelley and Byron should have been writing in prose; it may be that the determinism of the thirties was actually a romantic notion, which could have been expressed more successfully by the pathetic fallacy than by naturalistic techniques. At any rate, Mr. Prokosch has left a picture of our age that is flattering in the main, for it gives meaning even to our violence—often symbolic (as in *Age of Thunder*, where Jean-Nicolas is able to see light in the darkness only after he has been wounded among the *maquisards*), at least pictorial and relatively innocent.

Dasha, by E. M. Almedingen, leaves one with the feeling that this should have been a better novel than it actually is. The background is Russia in the late 1930's and early 1940's, and the characters include a typist, the daughter of a former footman to nobility, who takes part in a White Guard-German conspiracy because the workers' state leaves her discontent, a mother who compensates for the privations of her youth by a passion for consumer's goods in her old age, a meek hunchback servant who murders her mistress, a poet who was one of the vagrant children of the Revolution and who becomes furious when his students use Communist *clichés* in discussing literature, a religious mystic and a materialistic factory-worker who are twin brothers, and an English governess who fought with the Bolsheviks in 1917 as a man.

Properly developed, any one of these might have redeemed the novel alone; together, they might have made it a respectable successor to nineteenth-century Russian fiction.

Yet the author treats them all summarily and from a distance, like a magistrate with too many cases to handle, and disposes of them one by one, alternating between death and imprisonment with occasionally a suspended sentence. Her main character, a crippled girl with a talent for wood-carving who becomes a "state miracle" and is released as cured when there is a shortage of hospital beds, is too slight a personality to hold the book together, although its theme is apparently her growth to the kind of spiritual maturity many women like to see in other women. Her desire for "ownness," reflected either negatively or positively in the other characters, is finally translated into patriotism, with a review of Soviet military might arousing the spectators to feelings of pride and national unity and Dasha herself being last seen administering to a band of guerrilla fighters at the time of the German invasion.

Russian nationalism may be a psychological phenomenon whose significance foreigners have overlooked; it may be that feudal mysticism and industrial materialism are only garments it happens to put on in the fashion of the time. Nevertheless, the nineteenth-century Russian writers were able to make their nationalism artistically more acceptable under feudal mysticism than Miss Almedingen has been able to do under industrial materialism, because their novelistic problems and resolutions grew always out of the characters themselves. The "good" characters in *Dasha*, the teachers who serve as examples of devotion and resignation to the heroine, often sound deplorably like missionaries or social workers reviewing twenty years of accomplishment at a professional banquet; they have unquestionably made their lives a part of virtue, but Prince Myshkin and Alyosha Karamazov made virtue a part of their lives. In the case of the other characters, who do have implications for literature as well as for life, there is nothing in the novel itself to relate them convincingly to the nationalistic piety the author imposes on her story rather hastily and half-heartedly at the end.

In *The Cradle Will Fall*, an extremely modest first novel, Stephen Seley has a theme whose implications he does not follow out as fully as he might: a small boy's romantic worship of his mother, her death, which marks the beginning of his own maturity, and his feeling of guilt, which he associates with a childhood sexual vice. Mr. Seley's

failure, not a serious one within the limits of his aim, is due not so much to his own conception of his theme as to his dependence on his technique, in which he seems to have followed Dos Passos and Farrell religiously. Fragmentary impressions in the manner of the Camera Eye alternate with reveries in which the boy views his world in terms of schoolroom platitudes and newspaper slogans; a rather tedious section, reminiscent of Farrell at his worst, details the banality and grossness of a family Thanksgiving party; there are the expected contemporary allusions (the time is 1925) to Channel swimmers, the Teapot Dome scandal, *The Green Hat*, ukuleles and "Collegiate," the Coué Method, and Garbo and Gilbert. Mr. Seley has a good vision of middle-class childhood and is able to give a sense of freshness and immediacy to his observations; but, except for the boy's father and his coarse old grandmother, characterization is lost in his book and the nature of the boy's attachment to his mother is never satisfactorily explored.

Harry Harrison Kroll's *Fury in the Earth* is the only novel of the present group to deal with an actual historical event—the earthquake at New Madrid, Missouri, in 1811 and 1812. In its treatment, however, it falls somewhere between outright imitation of life and the transformation at work in folklore itself, which can create personalized myth out of the most impersonal manifestations of nature. In Mr. Kroll's hands, the New Madrid earthquake is more eschatological than seismological in its effects, and more moral than scientific in its import. "The Great Shakes" serve as an unexpected instrument of justice, revealing hidden weaknesses of character and punishing in turn a variety of sins—bigamy, greed, theft, murder, rape, religious recreance—in forthright Old Testament fashion, with escape reserved only for the chosen. The chosen turn out to be Miss Eliza Bryan, the New England school teacher whose contemporary account of the earthquake is one of the sources of the novel, and Hogshead Bolivar, the roistering and atheistical logger who is converted to religion by the shocks and rows away from the sinking town with a frontier beauty for wife and three unattached slaves and a safe from the wrecked hotel as property. *Fury in the Earth* is not an imaginative work as, for example, *The Robber Bridegroom* is, but it is the sort of groundwork that undoubtedly must still be laid before native American folk material can be used widely and creatively by American writers.

THE PROFESSOR AS JOURNALIST, AND VICE VERSA

BY ROBERT HEILMAN

Both these books¹ are at some distance from the center of modern criticism—the center at which, by means of systematic analysis, understanding is reached and judgments are made. Professor Peyre of Yale is within hearing distance of that center, but he misses it because of an imperfectly controlled tendency to love everybody (well, almost everybody), and because he fights against the severe critical discipline by which alone literature may be assayed with the finesse and the finality in behalf of which he does most movingly exhort us. Mr. Adams, the Tiresias of *The New York Times* (now a pretty happy seer: a new Emersonian swing, he says, is making fiction “affirmative” again—witness *The Robe*, *The Razor's Edge*, and, most of all, *A Bell for Adano*), is so far away that he is practically disintegrating under the centrifugal force. Peyre slaps smartly at modern critics; Adams stumbles heavily over modern novelists; Peyre can hardly squeeze his effervescent erudition (scarcely ever can he list two names without listing a dozen—the epic catalogue in modern pajamas) into some 300 pages; Adams, who writes like an undergraduate determined to fight out his assignment or bust, can hardly squeeze out 200 pages—but all the same he will find a comfortable little niche between all the massive, well-bred bookends. Adams is mired in cliché and gaucherie from the start; Peyre bubbles and whistles and pirouettes gaily all over the realms of literature, art, music, fashions, love, psychology—at his worst tripping forth with a frisky *Inside Everything* that demonstrates, but not quite persuasively, how not to write like the professors whose style he ceaselessly—and fittingly—laments. The irony of it is, in fact, that one might well take Peyre for an implausibly well-read journalist and Adams for a plodding professor. For, finally, Adams does have, albeit equivocally, a critical principle—Good Literature Must Love Life; whereas Peyre has none—though he has any number of maxims, some of them admirable.

Peyre crowds more than half his book with a supererogation of critical boners past and present. Here the only flaw in the merriment

¹WRITERS AND THEIR CRITICS: A STUDY OF MISUNDERSTANDING. By Henri Peyre. Cornell University Press. xii+340 pages. 1944. \$3.00 THE SHAPE OF BOOKS TO COME. By J. Donald Adams. Viking. xvii+202 pages. 1944. \$2.50.

comes when the reader pulls himself up logically and recognizes that the demonstration of error depends wholly on his assumption that *we* do know what is good and bad literature. Perhaps *we* do. But whether *we* means "we, Peyre" or "we, the people" (the author's ambivalent *we* is constantly troublesome), we the readers have not been left much ground to stand on either way: many of us will have grave doubts of Peyre's own judgment, and he himself has disqualified the rest of us by his utter destruction of the "myth of posterity." For we are posterity too.

But whether or not the errors be upon critics proved, Peyre moves on to an important problem: the creation of standards by which critics of new literature may not so often miss the boat. What does he urge those critics? Avoid personal prejudice, mercantilism, misoneism, platitudes about the decadence of the era, moral and patriotic indignation, seduction by mere novelty and superficial charm, uncritical condemnation of obscurity, the scientific and sociological blind alleys, worship of personality and sincerity, narrowness, dogmatism, lack of candor, bad style, and the Seven Sins of Scholarship—an anthology of *caveats* which indiscriminately embraces the embarrassingly elementary and that which is in need of continuous re-emphasis. He is at his best in berating the professors, the criers-down of obscurity, the my-country-right-or-wrong school, the frantic moralists who shudder at the unmedicated complexions of sturdier literary works but fail to suspect the poisonous bowels of the slick little optimistic best-seller jobs. Otherwise he is weaker. He keeps thinking of excellent criticism not as an end but as a means to other ends—more enlightened businessmen, more poems by Keats, etc. His insistence on the impartial and the undogmatic may come to mean merely lack of a critical position and of a metaphysic. His recipe for a better review than we now have, "broad in outlook, serious yet not technical in tone, and tolerably well written," is a blueprint for a superficial journal without a point of view. His positive demands are either axiomatic or futilely imprecise. That a critic must "interpret," "communicate," and "judge" none will doubt. But when we are told that the prime quality to be sought in literature is *intensity*, without being given a critical method for distinguishing the intensity which many of us feel in *Macbeth* from the intensity which Peyre feels in that "incomparable jewel," Shelley's *Indian Serenade*, we feel that Peyre fires only until he sees the whites of their eyes. When we are told that "the most satisfactory critic . . . possesses and retains a capacity to feel a shock

in the presence of beauty and originality, and to submit to that shock with sensuous—the adjective being in this case equivalent to wise—passiveness,” or that we should be pretty alert “if a new work of art or literature seems to whisper a secret message” and to bring “a joy hardly felt before,” we feel that we are being given a soulquake or a bowl of custard instead of hard thinking. Peyre tells us, of course, that after we have quit shuddering we had better try a little diagnosis to see whether the god is really present or whether we only have a touch of aesthetic ague. Very sound: *sed praeterea nihil*. The real critical problem, the principles and method of diagnosis, is untouched. And for the consultants from whom he might get help in a crisis, Peyre has but scorn. He sneers at “understanding poetry,” at “murder through dissection” (though he can praise *THE SOUTHERN REVIEW*, a regular hostel of homicides), at the “acid abstractions” of modern critics who he says are rightly called “uninfluentials,” at the myomorphic productions of those “arid and austere mountains,” Richards and Empson, at the “jargon” of Burke and Richards. And so on. Peyre was seized on the road to Damascus all right, but he came up with, instead of a vision, only a bump on the head. He knows that something is wrong, but his sight is blurred. He can admit some virtue in Eliot but give tragic laurels to Euripides; he can question Pottle’s relativism but exclaim that Goethe “actually refused to appreciate Shelley”; he can call *THE YALE REVIEW* timid, but *THE KENYON*, strident; he can be severe with Babbitt but gentle with W. L. Phelps; he can call for “sensitive perception of beauty” but provide no discipline for the percipient. So we are not surprised that he lists Hazlitt and Pater as the first of English critics, and sees Alfred Kazin as the great white hope, perhaps, of contemporary criticism. For beneath the erudition and the axioms we find simply, all a-tingle, another Old Gustonian.

Adams might really profit from the Peyre rulebook. With a heavy whiskey-ad sagacity he tells us once again that nasty writers have brought about a mood of negation and despair, and gad sir, they had better restore the dignity of the human spirit. He assures us that Henry James’s material was trivial and that “no novelist can be devalued because he is lacking in form”; reasons that Faulkner’s decadence is proved by the fact that only one book of his has sold as many as 10,000 copies; denies that the American “success story” has ended or that individual opportunities have “dried up” except as “they have been curbed by governmental restrictions” (the *Times-*

geist, perhaps?); decries "whiners" and "sneerers," though he himself can curl a mean lip at the "self-appointed literary elect"; and, while justly charging Dreiser with "heavy and confused prose," writes like this:

It would be rash to speak dogmatically, but as I look backward now, and try to assess the results of that reading, it seems evident to me that in my own case, at least, my present taste and preferences where books are concerned derive in no small measure from the time when my reading was opening up, from day to day, new and exciting vistas.

Can those sixty-five words be attempting to say, "Childhood reading has probably influenced my literary taste"?

Adams demands notice only because he helps circulate, in a noxious popular form, the most destructive heresy of our day. In him, it appears at three levels. Logically, it is the fallacy that he who is shrewd enough to see and point to decay is the cause of it. Aesthetically, it becomes the sentimental quarter-truth that literature must love Life. The apostles who sponsor this credo mean, by Life, whatever enhances their euphoria. If the artist admits into his pages more than the marginal peccadilloes which the Life-lovers conceive of as exhausting human nature's capacity for evil, the lusty gentlemen no longer feel good inside, and so they bawl opprobriously at the artist that he "hates life." Huxley and Swift are favorite targets for this strategy. Thus we come to the third and ultimate level of heresy—the metaphysical or theological. Adams remarks that post-war cynicism and rationalism "played the very devil with poetry." This figure is resoundingly hollow, for—and this is the crux of the matter—Adams does not believe in the devil. Hence he supposes that whatever writer exhibits a sense of the reality of the devil must be lacking a sense of life (what about Dante, by the way?), and he cannot conceive that literary diabolism may be healthily affirmative. If now we have extraordinarily vehement reassertions of the ubiquity and downright unpleasantness of the devil, what they indicate is a reaction against the romanticism that had deflated him into a bogie-man of only transitory propaedeutic utility. Adams is one of a long—and still, indeed, very flourishing—line of village adiabolists. But the fact that he did not invent his neo-Faustian error does not mean that he can avoid responsibility for it. It is something to answer for if, to a well-meaning, well-cushioned world badly in need of an awareness of spiritual realities,

a critic describes artists' efforts, successful or not, to come to grips with those realities—describes them in the manner of a Pollyanna telling the Rotary Club about her date with Spandrell.

A HOUSE DIVIDED

BY FRANK L. OWSLEY

"A house divided against itself cannot stand." Thus Mr. Webb introduces us to his provocative treatment of the sectional crisis¹, not the crisis of Lincoln's time, when the latter hopefully tossed this Biblical axiom in Douglas's path as a stumbling-block to the Little Giant and as a stepping-stone into the Senate for himself, but the crisis of the present. From Appomattox to the Democratic national convention in 1936, when the South was disfranchised in the selection of a president by the abolition of the two-thirds rule, and the Democratic convention in 1944, when James Byrnes was rejected as Vice-President because he was a Southerner, the United States has been ripping out along the sectional seams. During this period the North has in essence made itself the United States, and has held the South and the West as colonies. Thus is presented the unusual spectacle of a sovereign nation whose chief colonial possessions are the vast contiguous territory comprising theoretically equal states.

While Northern dominance of the South was based on military force during reconstruction, its dominance of the West was for many years due to the territorial status and lack of population in that section. During the period of the Civil War and Reconstruction, when it was the sole ruling power in the United States, the North settled all sectional rivalries in its own interest and granted itself many special favors. The seats in the halls of Congress recently occupied by Southern members had scarcely been vacated before a Republican Congress passed a high protective tariff law with unseemly haste in the apparent fear that Southern members might return before the

¹DIVIDED WE STAND: THE CRISIS OF A FRONTIERLESS DEMOCRACY. By Walter Prescott Webb. Acorn Press. vii+151 pages. 1944. \$1.00. (New and revised edition; the first edition appeared in 1937.)

law could be enacted. Since that time, observes Webb, "the tariff wall has been built higher and higher" almost solely "for the benefit of a section," and at the expense of the South and West. In 1862 the old issue between the North and South over the route of the first transcontinental railroad was settled by the Republican Congress, and the Union Pacific was "constructed so as to make the West tributary to the North." This was the history of all the transcontinental lines built before 1880.

Webb considers the excessive granting of pensions one of the great favors which the North bestowed upon itself at the expense of the South and the West. The South in particular was heavily burdened since it not only pensioned its own Confederate veterans, but contributed one billion dollars to the eight billion dollar pension bill paid the Union soldiers, their widows and families. This was in essence a billion dollar indemnity levied upon the South in addition to the almost total wrecking of its physical plants and economic structure by the Civil War and Reconstruction. Patent laws have been shaped in the interest of the industrial North, and have operated to prevent the development of industry in the South and West. Under these laws the great industrial capitalists have almost invariably purchased and monopolized patents on machines and their parts, so that industries renting them—the monopolists will not sell—are always subject to blackmail and finally to destruction, as Webb so aptly illustrates in the case of the Texas milk bottle plant. The author does not overlook freight rate discrimination so contrived by the well-loaded I.C.C. as to kill Southern and Western industry which might compete with industry in the favored territory; but he does not elaborate this point as thoroughly as he does others.

While the tariff and pensions "have kept the North on the pay roll of the Government for three quarters of a century," and patent monopolies and freight rates have brought in great returns from the outlying provinces, Mr. Webb does not think for a moment that these in themselves go far toward explaining "the strong and ever tightening grip that that section has on the other two." Indeed, contends the author, these agents of sectional exploitation and favoritism "are puny when compared with the economic agent that has done the work." It has been the giant corporations, most of which are in the North, stronger than the state and often stronger than the national government, that have accomplished the final subjugation of the South and West. These corporations, of course, are to a considerable extent the product of the

high tariff, patent laws, freight rates, and other governmental favoritisms already discussed; but the author does not visualize them as the perfect instruments of exploitation until 1886 and 1888 when the Supreme Court of the United States decided that under the fourteenth amendment a corporation was a "person" with the same rights and immunities as a citizen. In addition to such rights and immunities, corporations, especially railroads, have the right of eminent domain, certain tax exemptions not enjoyed by a natural person, no time limit on their span of life, and above all, physical and financial power beyond that of man. Possessed of the rights of man and several extra privileges, and having great size and power, nothing human could stand up against the corporations. With hundreds of millions at their command—in the case of the United States Steel Corporation it was a billion and a half at the start—the dinosaurs have moved in and swallowed up the small industries and business establishments of the South and West, or have undersold them—for example the chain stores and the Standard Oil Company in its earlier days—and let them "die on the vine." They now own the coal, oil fields, iron, aluminum, sulphur, phosphate beds, and timber, together with the manufacturing plants to process these natural resources. They own or control the large mercantile houses, the drug stores, picture shows, railroads, bus lines, hotels and textile mills. (If there is anything of importance omitted in this list of ownership by Northern corporation it was probably an oversight). These absentee Northern corporations take no interest nor do they encourage their employees to show an interest in schools, churches, municipal improvement or any other community need; indeed, they are, as far as the South and West are concerned, anti-social. The South and West have less than the status of a share cropper on the land of an absentee landlord.

Mr. Webb, who is a patriotic American, in presenting the sorry picture of a divided country, is not aiming at stirring up worse dissension, but is attempting to gain the attention of the Northern people in the hope that they will put an end to sectional discriminations. But he is not optimistic about gaining any consideration from the dominant section, for the North is probably too complacent and rich to listen to reasonable protests. Apparently, observes Mr. Webb, a Southerner or Westerner has to make a fool of himself "to get a hearing for his cause" however reasonable it may be. But for the North to "be deaf to sane counsel" and to "make going so hard that a man has to make a fool of himself in order to get a hearing" is to court danger

for the whole country: such ignoring of long-standing injustices begets violence and imperils democracy. Some reviewers will doubtless put Mr. Webb in the class with those Westerners—or Southerners—who have made fools of themselves by extreme statements, yet *Divided We Stand* is fundamentally true. The language is somewhat keen-edged, though there is no invective or denunciatory word or phrase in it, nor is there any evidence of ill-will toward the masses of Northern folk. Indeed, a thoughtful examination of this book will reveal the fact that the author has used great restraint in his choice of material to be used as illustrative of the sectional divisions of the country. This illustrative material is *purely economic* and, consequently, essentially impersonal. Mr. Webb has studiously avoided social and psychological matters such as the Negro problem, the sectional nature of radicalism and its propaganda, the widespread ill will toward the other sections constantly expressed by such publications as the *Chicago Tribune*, *The Nation*, *The New Republic*, *The New Masses*, *The Daily Worker*, *The Crisis* and most urban papers of the North. In thus deliberately confining his work to the economic divisions between the sections in order not to be too offensive, the author has probably omitted the very forces that pose the greatest threat to the country.

THE STATE OF LETTERS

WE have been wondering why somebody has not sent us an angry or an enthusiastic reply to Mr. Blackmur's article, "The Economy of the American Writer," published in our Spring, 1945, issue. For good or ill (or for good and ill) Mr. Blackmur's picture of the relation of "high culture" to the American public has very wide implications. There is no doubt that the audience for the serious writer is smaller, absolutely and relatively, than it was a couple of generations ago; but whether Mr. Blackmur's prescription for this illness—university and foundation support of the serious writer—will effect a cure is open to question. Neither universities nor foundations are creators of culture; they can at best aid its fruition; and it is probable that an historical enquiry would reveal a deep and perpetual antagonism, as well as a necessary connection, between the creative imagination and the university. Is not the eccentricity of much contemporary writing, representing as it does a *real* if insecure relation to our society, to be preferred to a more facile literary communication made possible by the artificial security of the university or of the foundation? In saying this I am not taking issue with Mr. Blackmur; I am merely extending his remarks. We should differ, I think, when he asks this question:

... can contemporary artists in any probable society permit themselves the pride, or the waste, as the case may be, of the total rôle of the artist? Must not all serious artists rather grasp, both for their livelihood and for anchorage for their art, at any institutions, no matter how otherwise unlikely, that remove their values from the market?

There can be no doubt that the market, at the present time, is pretty bad; and the worst thing about it is not that it is crassly commercial, but that the amiable persons who run the Book Clubs

and edit *THE SATURDAY REVIEW OF LITERATURE* imagine in all innocence that they are maintaining literary standards. Nevertheless I do not agree with Mr. Blackmur (if indeed he would agree with my version of his point of view) that there is any possible way of cheating the market, or of circumventing it, short of the "total rôle of the artist." In the past generation, at certain universities—Chicago, Harvard, Stanford, and Vanderbilt—groups of writers appeared, and for a time flourished; but it is my impression that none of these insitutions did anything to bring their groups together, but were instead either officially indifferent or even hostile to their presence on the campus. Perhaps a spontaneous cordiality on the part of the institution would have been better than hostility (which nevertheless has had its uses in stimulating creative effort all over the western world in the past century and a half); but it is difficult to see much use in an organized program to do something for writers, sponsored by the universities and the foundations. At present perhaps the most and the best that can be done has been done for many years by the Guggenheim Foundation, which gives its support on the whole to good writers, and then declines to meddle with them; and the support is temporary—a desirable feature of any support to writers, since it stops short of removing them from the ordinary hazards of life. As I see the problem which Mr. Blackmur has stated so clearly, there can be no evasion of the either/or dilemma of the artist in all times; he can only remove himself from the market, whether it be favorable or unfavorable, by cultivating the "pride . . . of the total rôle of the artist"; for otherwise to take him out of the market is to take him out of his society, making him a Greek slave and a mere rhetorician; or perhaps a professor—which is, of course, one way for the university to "use" the writer. (I do not suggest that the artist's behavior should be grimly *total* every minute of his waking life, because at least half the time he is only a human being; but he should avoid commitments which will keep his work from being total

in concentration, even if he write a poem or paint a picture only once a year.)

There are doubtless certain responsibilities which the universities and the foundations ought to feel towards literature; and I think no one can question the good will of even the misguided college presidents who, as Mr. Blackmur says, are turning their institutions into "service stations." But our sociological technique of the "survey" followed by the "project" will not give us the wisdom of this matter: there is no substitute for the civilized intelligence which has the courage to act directly, whether this intelligence be lodged in an isolated poet or in the Guggenheim Foundation, the Rockefeller Foundation, the Carnegie Corporation, or the Rosenwald Fund. The dangers of a blanket, uniform "policy" of powerful institutions towards the arts are implicit in a remark of Mr. T. S. Eliot's in this issue of *THE SEWANEE REVIEW*:

[The man of letters] should know that neither in a complete and universal uniformity, nor in an isolated self-sufficiency, can culture flourish; that a local and a general culture are so far from being in conflict, that they are truly necessary to each other. To the engineering mind, the idea of a universal uniformity on the one hand or the idea of complete autarchy on the other, is more easily apprehensible.

I assume that Mr. Eliot's "general culture" could not be equated with any possible universal *program* of institutional patronage of the arts; that indeed such a program might well ignore both this general culture and the indispensable element of "autarchy," or regionalism, the fusion of which has made our civilization. I am therefore somewhat taken aback by Mr. Blackmur's statement that we have not yet "concentrated [our] artistic energy; and until energy is concentrated—or *organized* [my italics] in some way—it can have only a low degree of availability." This looks to me a little like the engineering state of mind. A. T.